

**Abdul Kadir: Umno to blame for Bumiputeras lagging behind**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
**February 10 , 2012**  
**By Shannon Teoh**

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 10 — A former federal minister from Umno told his party today to stop blaming the Chinese community for its own failure to improve the socio-economic position of Bumiputeras.

Tan Sri Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir told a press conference today “the people who are in power since independence are Bumiputera leaders,” referring to Umno’s position as the largest party in Barisan Nasional (BN) and its hold on the prime ministership for the past 55 years.

“Do not blame the Chinese community or the Chinese political parties for the failure to bring up the socio-economic position of the Bumiputeras to its rightful and just position. We have had more than 50 years to do it,” he said.

The former information minister called on the government to return to the early days of the New Economic Policy in the 1970s where banks set aside 30 per cent of their loans for small Bumiputera companies and ministries had Bumiputera participation units.

“I can’t remember MCA or Chinese chambers of commerce or DAP ever being against this. It is the government that stopped it on their own,” he said.

He warned against going back to “the trend of creating big Bumiputera conglomerates,” pointing to the failure of Mahathir-era companies such as Renong and how Malaysia Airlines (MAS) suffered billions of ringgit in losses in the 1990s.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak announced yesterday Khazanah Nasional Bhd and Permodalan Nasional Bhd will be asked to transfer 10 non-core businesses to worthy Bumiputera-owned companies as part of Putrajaya’s efforts to grow the community’s equity.

Bumiputera equity stood at 22 per cent in February last year, short of the 30 per cent target set by the government.

State investment arm Khazanah had made a total of eight divestments which brought in proceeds of RM7.7 billion and helped to push the company’s profit before tax for the full year to RM5.3 billion from RM3 billion in 2010.

Key divestments included the sale of its 32 per cent stake in Pos Malaysia to DRB-Hicom Bhd for RM622.8 million and the complete privatisation of PLUS Bhd through a joint acquisition by UEM Group Bhd and the Employees Provident Fund (EPF).

Last month, Khazanah also announced the sale of its 42.7 per cent stake in national carmaker Proton Holdings Bhd to DRB-Hicom for RM1.3 billion.

Abdul Kadir made headlines last month when he accused the ruling coalition of handing out RM200 to RM1,000 to win previous elections but said he personally did not use the strategy known as “bomb.”

He called the press conference today to repeat his stand that BN should "stop the ugly and primitive practice of bribing the rakyat... whether directly or indirectly, in order to win elections."

The former Umno supreme council member also called on the party to end political corruption "whereby one has to pay money to his own fellow party members to be elected to various posts in Umno including the top posts."

Abdul Kadir, who was also a former minister of culture, arts and tourism, is now deputy president of non-partisan pro-unity NGO Angkatan Amanah Merdeka (Amanah) and executive chairman of the Sazean group.

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