

Measures Announced By Najib Described As Radical, Comprehensive And A Relief For Bumiputeras
Bernama
14 Sept, 2013

SHAH ALAM, Sept 14 (Bernama) -- Measures to empower the Bumiputera economy as announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Saturday brought relief to the 18.6 million Bumiputeras or 67.9 per cent of the 27.4 million Malaysian population.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, who described it as "the most significant in 10 years", said the announcement gave confidence to the Bumiputeras, who had previously felt uneasy on their position in the country's economy, that the Barisan Nasional (BN) government, led by Umno, would continue to protect their interests.

"Its a confirmation that the government provides the thrust to the country's policy so that some 70 per cent of the population benefit from the country's economic growth," he said after the launch of the Bumiputera economic empowerment programme by the prime minister at Universiti Teknologi MARA here.

"So, it brings relief and everybody is happy today. This speech is for the Bumiputeras. Perhaps, the most significant speech in 10 years for the Bumiputeras," he added.

Mustapa also described the announcement by Najib as a comprehensive, radical and the best in 10 years. Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Rohani Abdul Karim said the additional allocation of RM300 million for Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia and RM700 million for TEKUN Nasional would enable the ministry to carry out more activities to help the target groups, especially women, to improve their socio-economic standard.

She said TEKUN Nasional, the ministry's strategic partner in programmes to increase the income of low income earners under the 1Azam programme, involved 106,967 participants, with 60 per cent of them women.

She said 90 per cent of the participants were Bumiputeras.

Apart from that, she said the ministry was also working with Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia to train 4,300 entrepreneurs, where 80 per cent of them were women.

She said it also gave significant meaning to the Bumiputeras in Sabah and Sarawak and thanked the prime minister for providing them with vast opportunities in the empowerment of Bumiputera economy.

Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Minister Datuk Hasan Malik described the measures announced by the prime minister as "very brave and transparent".

He said all Bumiputeras should play their respective role, whether as party leaders or traders, to ensure success of programmes to empower them.

"Don't just ask what they can get from the government, but to ask themselves what they can contribute for the progress of the Bumiputeras," he added.

Meanwhile, Wanita Umno chief Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil called on women, especially

entrepreneurs, to grab the opportunities provided in the agenda to empower the Bumiputera economy.

"The womenfolk should go for it. Wanita Umno's struggle is not only to empower women in terms of politics, but also economically," she added.

Shahrizat, who is the prime minister's adviser in women's affairs, said the women entrepreneurs should not confine themselves to activities in the traditional sector only because the opportunities made available to them were huge.

She said the agenda to empower Bumiputera economy would not only benefited a certain race, but also other races due to its inclusive nature.

Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar said the announcement by the prime minister on more training programmes by the National Youth Skills Institute (IKBN) be held would enable more young people to take up skill courses.

He said the announcement also brought relief to those who were not able to pursue their studies at universities as they could go for skill training.

Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Idris Haron said the announcement by the prime minister refuted the allegation by Malay pressure groups that the Bumiputeras were neglected economically.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the agenda to empower Bumiputera economy was the result of discussion and mandate obtained during the Umno general assembly which was not only open, but "Brave, transparent and non-apologetic".

He believed that many Bumiputeras would benefit from it, especially when its implementation would be based on meritocracy.

Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal said the five focus on empowerment of Bumiputera economy were financial initiatives to boost Bumiputera participation in the field of entrepreneurship and education.

Referring to the matching fund between MARA and the government, he said, it could assist students from poor family background to pursue studies.

Tekun Nasional chairman Datuk Hamidah Osman and GiatMARA chief executive officer (CEO), Meriyam Abd Majid, thanked the prime minister for announcing additional funds to their agencies.

Pertubuhan Pribumi Perkasa (Perkasa) president Datuk Ibrahim Ali said the CEOs of government-linked companies (GLCs) should implement the policy on Bumiputera participation in their respective companies.

CEOs who failed to do so should be sacked, he added.

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