

**Bumi agenda is divisive, unnecessary, says DAP
Malaysian Insider
Sept 17 , 2013
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Putrajaya has been urged to carry out an audit of existing Bumiputera-targeted government programmes to find out their weaknesses and improve their performances instead of returning to failed "Mahathirist" crony-led initiatives.

Serdang Member of Parliament Dr Kian Ming (pic) urged Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to think of new ways for Bumiputeras to participate in the economy such as withholding tax for those allocated Bumiputera lots in IPOs to discourage the selling off of these shares for a quick profit.

"Najib's announcement on the new measures and strategies to empower the Bumiputera economy just two days prior to Malaysia Day is divisive, unnecessary and in the long-run damaging to the economic and social cohesion of the country," Ong said.

Ong was commenting on the announcement of the Bumiputera Economic Empowerment Agenda by Najib in Shah Alam last Saturday.

The new plan includes a slew of economic programmes as well as cash aid which Putrajaya said was aimed at helping Bumiputeras financially.

Ong joined DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang in questioning if the new initiative would overturn the New Economic Model (NEM), the Economic Transformation Program (ETP) and the Government Transformation Program (GTP).

Lim said that Najib appeared to show that he has ditched the NEM that was designed to get Malaysia out of the middle-income trap.

Ong, in a statement today, said that the Bumiputera agenda has no mention of targeting the bottom 40% of households, which were the target of the NEM.

"What is more disappointing is that Najib left out the poor in Sabah and Sarawak, the vast majority of whom are Bumiputera as well as the Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia. These groups were specifically mentioned in the NEM as well as in the 10th Malaysia Plan," he added.

Ong added that the Bumiputera agenda contradicted the initiative to increase competition by "restricting the players who take part in the marketplace".

"It contravenes the initiative to reduce the government's role in business by once again trying to influence the policies of the GLCs and GLICs."

He cited the example of the failed Bank Bumiputera, a "government creation", which no longer existed because of "mismanagement and misplaced government lending directives".

"The entity that replaced Bank Bumiputera – CIMB - is a Malay-Bumiputera led organisation that has become much more ethnically diverse in its make-up, has expanded aggressively around the region and is seen as a much better-run bank with much less government intervention especially compared to its predecessor," Ong noted.

The Bumiputera agenda, he pointed out adds another unnecessary layer of bureaucracy - the Bumiputera Development Units - which will be set up in ministries.

"This will inevitably slow down the decision-making process as policies and plans are constantly evaluated on whether they will achieve the desired Bumiputera agenda."

It also went against the public reform initiative, Ong pointed out, as billions of ringgit are promised without proper evaluation of previous initiatives, similar in nature and contradicts the ETP by diverting it from a private sector to a government-led transformation plan.

"Najib's Bumiputera agenda also contravenes the GTP by diverting it from its needs-based and race-blind Key Performance Index (KPI).

"All of the KPIs identified under the six National Key Results Areas (NKRAs) do not incorporate affirmative action measures.

"Even Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's National Education Blueprint 2013-2025 does not have an explicit Bumiputera agenda.

"The blueprint certainly did not include the creation of a unit to oversee the implementation of the Bumiputera agenda," Ong added. - September 17, 2013.

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