

**Don't ignore other races, PAS president tells Putrajaya  
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BY YISWAREE PALANSAMY**

It is not right for the government to forsake other races in economic development in the name of protecting the rights of Bumiputeras, said PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang (pic).

He said although the Bumiputera community lag behind in several aspects, it is not fair to devise a plan only for them as the other communities also play a role in the economy.

"This is why PAS advocates a charitable country theme where all, regardless of race, are included," Hadi said today.

"We don't deny that there are Bumiputeras who are still struggling but it is not right to forsake the other races in the name of protecting the Bumiputeras despite them being the majority race."

In a reference to the Bumiputera Economic Empowerment Agenda announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak two days before the 50th Malaysia Day celebrations, Hadi said the plan was not in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Constitution.

He said economic aid for the poor must be equally distributed to both the Malays and non-Malays.

"The constitution looks at the reality that exists, which is that the Malays outnumber the non-Malays.

"However, the constitution also regards highly the people's rights and basic human rights. Therefore, on this basis, equality must prevail in matters of economic development," said Hadi, who is the Marang Member of Parliament.

In launching the special plan, Najib had urged non-Malays not to view it negatively, saying the plan did not deny anyone their rights.

He said the government was transparent and fair in dispersing the country's wealth.

"The Malays need not worry, as the survival of the Malay community will still be the topmost priority as long as I live," Najib said.

However, an academician from University Malaya criticised the plan as unconstitutional because the new measures and strategies violated the Federal Constitution which stresses on equality.

"These provisions are not mentioned in the constitution and no one is coming out to say it," said associate professor Dr Azmi Sharom.

Putrajaya was also urged to carry out an audit of existing Bumiputera-targeted government programmes to identify their weaknesses and improve their performances.

Meanwhile, Serdang MP and DAP election strategist Dr Ong Kian Ming said Najib should

think of new ways for the Bumiputera community to participate in the economy. -  
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