

Malaysians deserve answers on 1MDB and RM2.6b donation, Zeti says

Malay Mail Online

September 21, 2015

BY JOSEPH SIPALAN

Bank Negara Malaysia Governor Tan Sri Zeti Akhtar Aziz said the public wants answers to questions about 1MDB and donations to the prime minister and they deserve to get the answers. — File pic

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 21 — The public have every right to get answers on the controversy surrounding state-owned investment firm 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) and the RM2.6 billion donation made to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's private bank accounts in the interest of greater transparency in governance, Tan Sri Zeti Akhtar Aziz said today.

The Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) Governor said there must also be clarity on which authorities are probing both issues, especially with the police, Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC) and the central bank all having launched separate investigations.

“Right now, we know the public wants answers to these questions and they deserve to get the answers,” Zeti told a panel discussion at the Economic Update 2015 here.

“We know that there is ongoing investigations, but we also need to know who are doing what investigations,” she added.

Zeti noted that BNM has already handed over to the Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC) their investigations papers on possible contraventions to approvals granted to 1MDB, and that the central bank is in ongoing discussions with the AGC on the issue.

She stressed that transparency in governance has now become a vital aspect in maintaining credibility internationally, especially with increasingly strict standards set by the global Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

Zeti noted that international regulators have placed particular attention on the issue of money laundering in the follow up of events that were tied to terrorism financing.

“They (FATF) set the standards and they have been strengthened immensely these past few years. They will come to every country to assess if we implement and enforce these standards.

“Malaysia already had its assessment and we came out quite well, but they would like to see further enforcement taking place.

“In this day and age, it must be known that there is no place on this planet that anyone can hide,” Zeti said.

Last week, a draft report by the Paris-based FATF gave good grades to Malaysia for its anti-money laundering efforts, saying the country had put in place a “robust policy framework” to combat the crime.

The global body – which monitors how countries fight illicit financial flows – noted however that Malaysia needs to be more effective in targeting high-risk offences and needs to pay more attention to transnational crime, according to a report by newswire Reuters.

The FATF report has yet to be made public and is subject to changes.

Najib is currently facing harsh criticism over his handling of 1MDB, which has reportedly racked up debts totalling RM42 billion, and the lack of clarity over the RM2.6 billion donation ostensibly from the Middle East.

Copyright © 2015 Malay Mail Online

Sources: <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/malaysians-deserve-answers-on-1mdb-and-rm2.6b-donation-zeti-says>