

**BN Champions Development That Is Balanced, Inclusive To Achieve Social Justice – Najib
Bernama
May 3, 2016**

KUCHING, May 3 (Bernama) -- The Barisan Nasional government champions development that is balanced and inclusive to achieve social justice, thus ensuring the economy of the Bumiputeras grows along with that of other races, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said Bumiputeras now constituted 68 per cent of the population as compared to 62 per cent 25 years ago because their birth rate was much higher.

"If 68 per cent own assets and wealth that is too small, it is not balanced, hence there is no social justice," he said when opening the "Hikmah Exchange" project here today.

Najib said the project was an initiative of the government to ensure Bumiputeras owned real estate, especially in strategic locations in towns.

The project will help increase the number of Bumiputera investors in commercial real estate through Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs).

"For example, when launching giant iconic projects, 46 per cent of the contract value we give to the best Bumiputera companies. For the Menara Warisan Merdeka project by PNB, we make sure that 42 per cent of the contracts go to Bumiputeras.

"So too for the Pan Borneo Highway Project. Not less than RM5 billion, and if can RM8 billion (contracts) we must give to Bumiputera companies," he said.

The Hikmah Exchange in Jalan Haji Taha, occupying a 1.4 hectare site, will become a new commercial centre in Kuching.

Owned by Yayasan Hartanah Bumiputera Sarawak (YHBS), its development is being undertaken by Permodalan Satok Berhad in collaboration with Harakah Islamiah (Hikmah), Majlis Agama Islam Sarawak (MAIS), Pelita Holdings Sdn. Bhd. and Faradale Development Sdn. Bhd.

The project is divided into three main components, an office block, convention centre and commercial space, including two tower blocks, 13 storeys each, 10 floors of parking space, a communications tower, skygarden and 12 lifts.

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