

#Reaction: No One Left Out In 2018 Budget - Economist

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 28 (Bernama) -- The 2018 Budget is inclusive, comprehensive and most importantly, aggressive in the approach to implement programmes for the benefit of the targeted groups, says economist Prof Dr Hoo Ke Ping.

Terming the budget as a 'Bird's Eye View Budget', he said the document was drawn up by taking into account the needs of every segment of the population, from newborn babies to working women, senior citizens and the business and agriculture sectors.

He said Najib used the bird's eye view when drawing up the 2018 Budget because everyone in all the sectors was well taken care of, adding the document also set a clear and easy key performance index.

"Even the birds in the sky are taken care of," Hoo told Bernama here today.

Commending the initiatives to alleviate the rising cost of living, the economist said the RM120 million easy loans to be provided to 1,000 food truck entrepreneurs would notably help to reduce food prices while helping enterprising individuals to generate extra income.

"Rising food prices in major cities have become a major concern of the people and it is one of the main factors that drive up the inflation rate. Through the programme, food can be sold at a cheaper price because the cost incurred will be lower as compared to the operating cost of an eatery," he said.

On housing, Hoo was optimistic that the affirmative measures proposed in the 2018 Budget, especially construction of affordable homes in major cities would bring down the escalating house price.

He said through the smart public-private partnership, housing schemes such as 1Malaysia People Housing (PR1MA) and Rumah Wilayah Persekutuan (Rumawip) which received good response from the rakyat due to its affordable prices and strategic locations, would inevitably force the house prices in surrounding areas to go down.

"This is a very crucial measure as it will allow more people, especially the young generation to own a home," he noted.

In the 2018 Budget, the government proposed to allocate RM1.5 billion to build 210,000 PR1MA homes which will cost RM250,000 and below per unit, and implementation of the MyHomes programme for developers to build more affordable homes.

In tabling the 2018 Budget at the Dewan Rakyat Friday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said a total of RM280.25 billion would be allocated for the budget, where RM234.25 billion (84 per cent) was for operating expenditure and RM46 billion (16 per cent), for development.

Commenting on the huge difference between operating expenditure fund and allocation for development, Hoo pointed out the move would be able to stimulate the economy and generate further growth.

"It is not always a bad thing when more money is spent on operating expenditure than for development. In fact, it will have multiple effects.

"When you look at the Budget, and the various initiatives that will be implemented, people across the board will benefit. It means that more money will be put directly into the man-in-the-street's pocket, thus stimulating the market and economy," he said.

He said when a development project was carried out, although it would benefit the locals, imports of construction raw materials, for instance, would result in outflow of monies.

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