

Poverty eradication programme will be fair for all, says Muhyiddin

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Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin says government's Shared Prosperity Vision policy takes into consideration the interests of all races. (Bernama pic)

KUALA LUMPUR: The country's poverty eradication programme has been implemented after taking into consideration not only the racial and ethnic composition but also various other factors in an effort to create fair and equal opportunities for all.

Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said it was also to ensure that the nation's wealth could be distributed and enjoyed equally by the people.

"The Perikatan Nasional government's policy is to implement a comprehensive poverty eradication programme and this takes into account the disparities between Bumiputeras and non-Bumiputeras, and regional and non-regional areas, including those in Sabah and Sarawak, after various initiatives done previously," he said.

He said this in reply to Senator Razali Idris, who wanted to know about the initiatives taken by the government to tackle poverty in Kelantan, Terengganu, Sabah and Sarawak.

He said the emphasis given to improving Bumiputeras' socio-economic status did not mean that the government was sidelining the non-Bumiputeras, hence the creation of the Shared Prosperity Vision policy, which took into consideration the interests of all races.

"Nevertheless, the Bumiputeras make up the majority, comprising almost 70% of the country's population, and that is why the government is focusing on them to develop the economy as a whole," Muhyiddin said.

He, however, said that the government was always concerned about the problems faced by the non-Bumiputeras and would not neglect them, especially in tackling poverty.

"We cannot neglect them or let them live in poverty just because they are non-Bumiputeras.

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Muhyiddin said one of the problems faced by the government in its effort to eradicate poverty was the lack of a database that has complete information on Bumiputeras' current achievements in the various economic sectors.

For that, he said, the government had established the Bumiputera Agenda Steering Unit under the Prime Minister's Department as the secretariat to coordinate and steer the Bumiputera agenda in a bid to increase the community's share of the economy.

Also, to empower the Bumiputera economy, he said, the focus would be on their participation in certain sectors such as banking, manufacturing and electronics, adding that the government would identify their weaknesses and introduce initiatives to ensure that they would not lag behind other communities.

In reply to Razali's question on the effectiveness of the Bumiputera Prosperity Council, Muhyiddin said the Bumiputera poverty rate stood at 7.2% last year while the unemployment rate for the second quarter of this year was 5.2%, compared with the national average of 5.1%.

He said Bumiputera equity ownership in the corporate sector was only 16.2% in 2015, compared with 30.7% for non-Bumiputeras and 45.3% for foreigners.



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