

# Anti-graft efforts not enough, need for radical reforms, says Pemandu



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Malaysia's anti-corruption efforts are not enough and more radical reforms must be done to eradicate graft, Putrajaya's efficiency unit said today in response to a global survey that showed a drop in public confidence over the issue.

But politicians from the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) insist the lack of confidence revealed by the 2013 Global Corruption Barometer is due to a perception problem rather than an actual problem.

"The survey figures clearly show that what we have done is not enough. We need to intensify efforts and continue to push for improvements across the social, political and business arenas," said Ravindran Devagunam, who is in charge of anti-corruption in the Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu).

But Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor said it was just a perception.

"The problem is perception; the government is making all efforts to curb this. The giver must also stop so there is no taker," he told reporters in Parliament today.

According to the GCB survey, 87 per cent of Malaysians agree that ordinary people can make a difference in the fight against corruption.

"This shows that an overwhelming percentage of the public are willing to cooperate in eradicating corruption. With a strong coalition and proper engagement, we will be able to create public pressure for the necessary changes to happen," said Ravindran.

He said Pemandu has intensified efforts to engage with several NGOs and professional bodies and started building coalitions with ministries and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) to monitor expenditure and good governance.

The GCB findings also identified political parties and public officials including parliamentarians as most corrupted.

In line with this, Ravindran said changes rolled out under the anti-corruption NKRA's Political Financing framework would play a big role in tackling the issue of political corruption.

"Amendments will be made to the Societies Act 1966 with the aim of preventing internal leakage of funds within political parties," he said, adding that the Registrar of Societies would make the amendments by end of the year to ensure better transparency in the way political funds are managed.

As for Cabinet members, Ravindran noted that ministers are currently required to declare their assets to the prime minister as well as to the MACC.

He said from this year, it is also a requirement for the special officers to the ministers to declare their assets to their respective minister as well as to MACC.

“By doing this, we hope to prevent opportunities for misconduct to occur not only with members of the Cabinet but the people who work for them as well,” said Ravindran.

In addition, for increased transparency and accountability by ministries, the Auditor- General’s Performance Audit Report will be tabled at every Parliament sitting instead of just once a year.

To fight graft in the private sector, the Corporate Integrity Pledge was launched in 2011 and has since started to bear results this year, following the spate of arrests of several corporate figures including a senior arbitrator and a Petronas employee.

“This will ensure that corporations take responsibility for the corrupt acts conducted by the employees on behalf of the company,” he said. - July 10, 2013.