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Govt launches initiative to boost income of hardcore poor, B40

Rafizi Ramli says the government cannot continue giving out cash handouts in the long-term.



Economy minister Rafizi Ramli said 126,372 families had been registered as hardcore poor under the eKasih system while 2.91 million families were categorised as B40.

KUALA LUMPUR: Economy minister Rafizi Ramli today launched the People's Income Initiative which is aimed at increasing the income of the hardcore poor and B40 group.

Rafizi said the programme would leverage on the public and private sector as well as the community to spur economic growth at the grassroots level to address poverty and inequality in the country.

The Pandan MP said this would involve three initiatives – Inisiatif Usahawan Tani (Intan), Inisiatif Usahawan Makanan (Insan) and Inisiatif Operator Perkhidmatan (Ikhsan).

“Intan will target groups interested in agriculture. Food crops that have a high volume of trade and that are imported, such as chilli, ginger and corn, will be planted.

“For this to work, the government will open up 800 acres (324ha) of federal government land to give the people the opportunity to get involved in agricultural activities.

“For Insan, the initiative aims to sell ready-made food such as breakfast and lunch at a price as low as RM2 through vending machines. This will give people the opportunity to generate additional income,” he told reporters following the launch event in Ampang, here.

As for Ikhsan, Rafizi said this initiative would recruit people who are skilled in maintenance and service, adding that this would overcome the problem of labour shortage in the public sector.

To date, 126,372 families are registered as hardcore poor under the eKasih system while 2.91 million families are categorised as B40.

An estimated 150,000 people are expected to benefit from the initiatives to boost their income.

Rafizi said the government needed to move away from one-off aid and instead start adopting a targeted approach.

He added that other public programmes would also be streamlined to ensure that every ringgit spent reaches its intended target to help the poor.

Rafizi admitted that it would not be sustainable for the government to continue providing one-off aid due to its RM1.5 trillion debt.

“We only have this one window of opportunity to do it (structural reforms).

“Any structural reforms take some pain in the beginning, but we do not want to repeat the acts of the past administration of trying to do quick fixes for immediate gains but prolong the structural issues.”

Under Budget 2023, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim announced a RM8 billion allocation to be disbursed as cash aid under Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah. This will benefit 8.7 million people. The poorest will receive up to RM3,100.