

MA63 panel should include all govt parties: Dompok

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KOTA KINABALU:

The federal level Steering Committee set up to review and streamline the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63) should be enlarged to include all heads of



parties in the Sabah and Sarawak state governments, said former Chief Minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok (pic).

"We are talking about MA63 which was signed by Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak at that time (in 1963). I think all parties in the Government must be in there," he told reporters after presenting a lecture titled "The Kadazandusun in the New Malaysia", organised by Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), here, Friday.

He also said in the case of Sabah, the State Government needed to take concerted action on some of the MA63 issues.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Liew Vui Keong had, on Oct 20, announced the Steering Committee headed by Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

It also includes Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal, Sarawak Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abang Johari Tun Openg, Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng, Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali and Communication and Multimedia Minister Gobind Singh Deo.

The rest are Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, Works Minister Baru Bian, International Trade and Industry Minister Darell Leiking, Transport Minister Anthony Loke Siew Fook, Chief Secretary to the Government Datuk Seri Dr Ismail Bakar, Chief Judge of Sabah and Sarawak Datuk David Wong Dak Wah, Attorney-General Tommy Thomas, Univer-

siti Malaya Law Professor Prof Emeritus Datuk Dr Shad Saleem Faruqi, Sabah Attorney-General Zaleha Rose Pandin and Sarawak Attorney-General Datuk Talat Mahmood Abdul Rashid.

Liew also said the committee would meet in about a month in Putrajaya to determine the direction on MA63 and that among the issues that will be studied included oil royalty and development in Sabah and Sarawak.

"So, I think this will be very inclusive that will include so many issues very close to the heart and minds of every Sabahan and Sarawakian. Generally, we do not want to go back on the historical aspect of the matter because some of the issues may be agreed upon without much dispute...go to the core of the matter straightway, the implementation of MA63," said Liew.

But Abang Johari later said there is a need for balance in the number of representatives from Sabah and Sarawak in the committee and that representatives from the two states should comprise the majority of members.

"It must be balanced. Then you can deliberate on issues that may be questioned now under MA63. Otherwise, it will be lopsided," said Abang Johari.

When asked what he hopes the new Government would do, Dompok, a former federal Minister, said it should just implement what had been promised.

"I mean probably Tun Dr Mahathir is joking that it is not in the Bible. I think you have to implement what you have promised. As long as they implemented what had been promised in their manifesto, everybody will be happy, I will be happy.

"But it must be implemented, whether it is not in the Bible or whatever, because it is in the heart of the people," he said.

To a question whether he has any plan

to return to politics, the former Malaysia Resident Ambassador to the Vatican, said he had already retired.

"Well, I am doing non-governmental works that I like. As I have mentioned, I am still the Chairman of the Montfort Youth Training Centre's Board of Governors. We are doing well, we are now expanding into plantation course. And I think it will increase its activities.

"So, now we will be recruiting and training youths to take some of the jobs in the plantation sector, including jobs that are still helmed by people from outside the State," said Dompok, who is also former President of United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun and Murut Organisation (Upko).

Asked whether it is true as viralled in social media that he advised current party President Datuk Seri Wilfred Madius Tangau to hop over to Parti Warisan Sabah (Warisan) on May 10 this year in the hope of saving his Vatican post, Dompok said:

"It is the first time that I hear about it. I don't think that has ever entered my mind. What happened that day I woke up quite quietly, I think it was about 9am and I saw a lot of missed calls not just from people from Barisan Nasional (BN) but also people from the religious community and all that.

"When I was appointed to the Vatican, I actually did not ask for the job. It was recommended to me and I accepted it. I even told Datuk Seri Madius that I was happy as I am and I don't need to be considered for a new appointment.

"It never entered my mind to go and recommend so that I can continue to be an ambassador. No. As it happened, the only reason I think the people are talking about is soon after that if I should go for another term but it is up to the Government...but I moved on, I don't want to go back to that," he said.