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MINISTER'S STATEMENT : YB DATO' ABDUL RAHMAN DAHLAN

SUBJECT : DISTINCTION BETWEEN JPP AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

As of late, there has been much speculation from several quarters on the establishment of the Residents Representative Committee or Jawatankuasa Perwakilan Penduduk (JPP), which more often than not has not been factual and has only served to create confusion and misperceptions. This calls for a clear explanation on how the local councils and JPP differ, principally in terms of their respective responsibilities and aims of establishment.

Under the Local Government Act 1976, local councils are entrusted with enforcement and legal powers. In particular, Act 171 stipulates that local councils are responsible for the collection of taxes, the creation of laws and by-laws, the granting of permits and licenses for trade within its respective municipality, the provision of basic amenities, waste management, as well as the planning and development of the area within its respective municipality. More importantly, local councils are equipped with enforcement powers.

Conversely, the Residents Representative Committee (JPP) is aimed to provide a channel to link urban dwellers and the federal government. This would be in the form of a formal authoritative structure at grassroots level, similar to the Village Development and Security Committee or Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan

Keselamatan Kampung (JKKK) in rural areas.

Each local council area will typically be divided into 24 zones, subject to the population density of the area. Under the JPP framework, each zone will be represented by one JPP Chairperson; hence a local council with 24 zones will have 24 JPP Chairpersons. To coordinate and ensure efficiency of the JPPs in all zones under the local council, a Residents Representative Council or Majlis Perwakilan Penduduk (MPP) will be established, and will be chaired by any person appointed by the Minister of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government. This Chairperson could be the Mayor / President of the respective local council or any person that fulfills the criteria set out by the Ministry. Apart from the JPP Chairmen, the MPP will also have the Heads of Federal Departments and Federal Local Leaders as members of the council.

The role of the MPP is to coordinate the implementation of urban wellbeing programs in the JPP zones, to obtain feedback on urban issues requiring immediate action and deliberate proposed programs and projects agreed at JPP level. At present, no such formal authoritative structure exists at grassroots level and the establishment of the JPPs would connect the disconnected, enabling greater synergy between urban dwellers and the federal government. Bear in mind, the majority of services in local councils are delivered by federal government agencies, for instance health (hospitals), education (schools) and security (police), JPPs would therefore ensure more effective communication to guarantee efficient services.

Fundamentally, local councils and JPPs differ in that the former acts altogether as a legal entity and enforcement agency, whereas the latter, JPPs, is administrative in nature, with neither legal nor enforcement powers. In essence, JPPs serve as a medium for the members of a community to participate in governance processes, consequently harnessing urban residents with better

service delivery.

The establishment of the JPPs is thus not a usurpation of the power of local authorities, as JPPs would not be in competition with the latter, but in fact have a complementary role in wider efforts towards the transformation of urban management. Nowadays, issues in the urban areas are becoming increasingly complex, requiring a more holistic approach by all parties involved, including the federal government, state government and local councils. As it is now, local councils do not possess the means and capabilities to handle all urban-related issues, as it is maintained that development in urban areas is not and cannot be the exclusive domain of local councils. JPPs would thus serve as a pertinent solution to the missing link in the handling of urban issues.

Dato' Abd Rahman Dahlan

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