

# No more cronyism, organisations say to Ting, corporate sector

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PETALING JAYA (June 4): As many as 20 civil society organisations (CSOs) have urged Tan Sri Ting Pek Khiing and the corporate sector in general to uphold transparency, accountability and integrity in all development projects, regardless whether the projects are publicly, privately or jointly owned and financed.

The CSOs said Ting's announcement of a mega project that he plans to develop on Langkawi Island without first obtaining the authorities' approval is disconcerting while raising concerns over compliance with regulatory requirements for such a project.

The CSOs include Aliran, Bersih 2.0, C4 Center, ENGAGE, Friends of Kota Damansara, Global Environment Centre (GEC), National Human Rights Society (Hakam), Health Equity Initiatives (HEI), MyPJ, Penang Forum, Pergerakan Tenaga Akademik Malaysia (GERAK), Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor, Pertubuhan Rangkaian Pembangunan Kesinambungan Malaysia (SUSDEN), Pusat KOMAS, Sarawakians Access (Saccess), Suara Rakyat Malaysia (Suaram), Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall Women Division, Women Development Organization of Malaysia, WWF-Malaysia and Yayasan Anak Warisan Alam.

"We urge Tan Sri Ting and his companies to join all Malaysians in recognising that Malaysia after May 9 is a new Malaysia. Compliance and integrity set the tone for today, not cronyism.

"Such is the new norm expected of the federal government, all state governments, all local authorities and all statutory bodies after May 9. It cannot be 'business as usual' post-GE14. Seeking or courting of political patronage over projects and businesses should not be a culture for both the corporate sector and government bodies," they said.

The CSOs added that, in principle, projects involving public funding must be commissioned by open tender and every procurement by government must maximise value for taxpayers' money as stated in Promise 23 in the Pakatan Harapan Manifesto.

In addition, before approval by the relevant authorities, all projects must be subjected to social, environmental and economic impact assessment where all stakeholders must be rightly consulted, in line with Promise 39 in the Pakatan Harapan Manifesto.

"We also urge Prime Minister Dr Mahathir to maintain a distance from this mega project (in Langkawi) due to his previous association with Tan Sri Ting," they concluded.

Earlier, in an interview with The Star, the Council of Eminent Persons (CEP) chairman Tun Daim Zainuddin had said the CEP will advise the government that all projects be awarded by open tender. He also advised Ting that it is best that he remains retired and "please help the government by not tarnishing its image".