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MEDIA STATEMENT

PAKATAN MUST GET IT RIGHT ON ASSET DECLARATION, COMPROMISE IS UNACCEPTABLE

PETALING JAYA (Monday): GIAT, a coalition of seven good governance civil society organisations, are calling on the government to take responsibility over poor implementation of public asset declaration for top politicians on the SPRM *mydeclaration* portal, and reminds the government that we need a federal asset declaration law according to international best practices.

Like many Malaysians, GIAT, as watchdog coalition for good governance, was looking forward to the “huge leap in transparency” that was originally scheduled for 1 October, then postponed to 15 October and then to 1 November.ⁱ However, when checking the portal at launch last week, we were dismayed that so little information was posted up.

Now the buck is being passed around. Politicians have stated that they have indeed declared their wider assets to MACC, some more than what is required. The website itself says there are ‘technical issues’ to resolve before more public asset declaration information can be released.

To add to the mixed messages, MACC Chief Commissioner Shukri Abdull has also gone on the record to say that they are “waiting for the final say from the Cabinet or the minister”, and that they are merely “following the government’s directive”.ⁱⁱ

So who is responsible for publicly publishing the asset declarations?

GIAT does not accept the buck being passed from one government agency to another. Politicians and the civil service must demonstrate their integrity to the Malaysian public. Malaysia cannot fall behind in international transparency standards.

GIAT believes that Malaysia needs a strong and robust asset declaration system in line with international best practice for good governance and anti-corruption. In the run-up to the 14th General Elections, we lobbied political parties with the GIAT Good Governance Agenda, which included a Pledge for a Public Asset Declaration Framework (PADF). (See <https://c4center.org/pledge-public-asset-declaration-framework/>.)

The PADF, authored jointly with the constitutional committee of the Bar Council, represents global best practices for asset declaration on what types of assets needs to be declared, who should declare and how often they should declare.

If it is the case that some MPs or ministers who are stalling the process, we support the opinion that the MACC Chief Commissioner’s call for an amendment to the MACC Act to make it mandatory for MPs to declare their assets.

However, it is in Malaysia’s best interest to have a holistic approach for asset declaration as recommended in the PADF: to also ensure that not only cabinet members, their family members, all members of parliament (government and opposition alike), state EXCO members, all members of state legislatures, and all senior officials of a public body.

After all, Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamed has publicly affirmed many times that Government Members of Parliament (MPs) need to submit their declarations – but as of today, it is quite appalling that 34 MPs/10 cabinet members have yet to declare their assets (according to the *mydeclaration* portal) despite being in power for almost half a year.ⁱⁱⁱ

In the PADF, we recommended that a federal legislative bill be introduced to enforce declaration and resolve the problem above. **[continued below]**

GIAT (Governance, Integrity, Accountability and Transparency) is a coalition of civil society organisations that consists of the Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS), The Center to Combat Corruption and Cronyism (C4 Center), Sinar Project, Transparency International Malaysia, The Society for the Promotion of Human Rights (PROHAM), Friends of Kota Damansara and MyPJ. If you would like more information about GIAT, questions can be directed to C4 Center at +603-7932 2507 or email info@c4center.org



This debacle stresses that we need strong political will to reform our politics and government, and the necessity of a federal law on asset declaration. The Pakatan Government must be accountable to the public and assure Malaysians that asset declaration is taken seriously, lest Pakatan Harapan’s credibility in their reform and anti-corruption platform be further tarnished.

Released by:

The Governance Integrity Accountability Transparency (GIAT) Coalition
which comprises:



ⁱ “MACC display of declaration of assets by ministers now on Oct 15”, *Edge Prop*, 28 September 2018, <https://www.edgeprop.my/content/1428444/macc-display-declaration-assets-ministers-now-oct-15>

ⁱⁱ Zakiah Koya, Vincent Tan, and Ashley Tang, “MACC: Brickbats over haphazard manner in which info was published was uncalled for”, *The Star*, 2 November 2018, <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2018/11/02/we-only-did-what-we-were-told-macc-brickbats-over-haphazard-manner-in-which-info-was-published-was-u/#bg3ti8hqabBdeSfy.99>

ⁱⁱⁱ Adam Aziz, “Dr Mahathir: Asset declaration to include family members”, *The Edge Financial Daily*, 11 July 2018, <http://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/dr-mahathir-asset-declaration-include-family-members>