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Everyone must play their part to ensure success of NACS, say NGOs

KUALA LUMPUR: Consistency, commitment and sustained political will are key to the success of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) 2024-2028.

An anti-corruption watchdog said the authorities must also explain the incentives given to people whenever they assist in the fight against corruption.

Malaysia Corruption Watch (MCW) president Jais Abdul Karim said public servants, especially top officials in ministries and government department heads, were important players in the fight against graft.

He said this role extended to all segments of society, including the private sector.

He said the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC)

must continue to stand firm and sustain efforts by the cabinet in the fight against corruption.

"The launch of NACS 2024-2028 is another significant step at ensuring a promising trajectory for the nation's future," he said.

"Compared with before, there is an assured level of authority with the MACC (today). But I must highlight that we must maintain the determination for the plan to succeed. Any hesitation will lead to adverse consequences."

While touching on the "incentives" aspect of NACS, Jais said the authorities must elaborate further as people needed to know about how these would apply to the private sector and people involved or affected by corruption.

He said transparency regarding

all types of incentives was essential for fostering trust and cooperation among all quarters.

In terms of educating the public, Jais said anti-corruption NGOs like MCW relied on special funding to execute educational and awareness initiatives. He urged government support for the group in this regard.

Former Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission commissioner Professor Dr Nik Ahmad Kamal Nik Mahmood said public awareness had become part of the agenda in NACP and NACS.

He said corruption was a "game of opportunity and chance" and it was time for Malaysia to plug the holes that allowed opportunities for graft.

"The MACC has conducted

many activities to this end. It is a matter of improving existing awareness and gauging the success of these activities," he said.

On incentives, he said such rewards might encourage civil servants to report corruption, but there should also be mechanisms to punish civil servants who failed to report corruption.

"In fact, the MACC Act has provided for that. The carrot-and-stick approach may work.

"However, personal values, conscience, religiosity and integrity are essential factors to determine whether civil servants are sensitive to corruption."

Transparency International Malaysia said the public must play their role in ensuring the effectiveness of NACS.

Its president Dr Muhammad Mohan said this was to ensure accountability and to foster a culture of integrity in society.

He lauded the initiative, stating that the country was on the right path to achieving its target of becoming one of the top 25 nations in the Corruption Perception Index within the next 10 years.

"The index is based on how people perceive corruption in this country. The people must feel that reforms have taken place to combat corruption.

"We cannot rely on only the MACC or the prime minister to do this. All government agencies and civil societies must work together to combat corruption. We need to change." **By Amalina Kamal and Rahmat Khairulrijal**

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