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KUALA LUMPUR, APRIL 9 (BERNAMA)—DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DATUK SRI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF THE GOVERNMENT RESTRICTING ECONOMIC EXPANSION BECAUSE SUCH RESTRICTIONS WOULD ONLY LEAD TO THE FAILURE OF THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY.

THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY WAS NOT A FOOLISH DREAM BUT ITS SUCCESS MUST DEPEND UPON EXPANSION.

"IT IS THEREFORE UNTHINKABLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO CREATE CONDITIONS WHICH STIFLE EXPANSION OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY," HE ADDED AT THE OPENING OF THE ONE-DAY MALAYSIAN CHINESE ECONOMIC CONFERENCE HERE.

HIS SPEECH WAS READ BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY DATUK LEW SIP HON.

DATUK SRI DR. MAHATHIR WHO IS ALSO MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY SAID THE ECONOMIC CAKE MUST BE MADE TO GROW BIGGER SO THAT THE PEOPLE WHO DID NOT HAVE A SHARE BEFORE MAY GET A SHARE NOW. THOSE WHO ALREADY HAD A SHARE IN THE CAKE WOULD NOT ONLY CONTINUE TO RETAIN THEIR SHARE BUT INCREASE IT.

--BERNAMA MORE HM 1245

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HE SAID THE ONLY OBSTACLE TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THIS OBJECTIVE WAS HUMAN WEAKNESS.

"FAR TOO MANY PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO LISTEN TO SPURIOUS ARGUMENTS APPEALING TO THEIR EMOTIONS THAN ARE WILLING TO APPRECIATE HARD FACTS," HE ADDED.

HE SAID MALAYSIA'S PAST POLICIES HAD RESULTED NOT ONLY IN DIVISIONS BUT ALSO CONFLICT.

"THE ONLY WAY TO REMOVE THESE BARRIERS IS TO RESTRUCTURE.

"HENCE THE AIM OF THE NEP IS TO REMOVE POVERTY (ABSOLUTE POVERTY) AND THE RESTRUCTURE SOCIETY SO THAT RACE WILL NO LONGER BE IDENTIFIED WITH ECONOMIC FUNCTION.

"WHAT IS NEEDED IS ACCEPTANCE OF THIS POLICY AND ADJUSTMENT BY EVERYONE, EVERY COMMUNITY, TO IT."

DATUK SRI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT OTHER COUNTRIES HAD SEEN WORSE POLICIES IMPOSED AND BECAUSE THERE WAS NO WAY TO OPPOSE THESE POLICIES, PEOPLE HAD ACCEPTED AND ADJUSTED THEMSELVES.

"THERE IS NO REASON WHY THE PEOPLE IN THIS LAND OF PLENTY, THIS LAND OF OPPORTUNITY, SHOULD NOT BE ABLE TO DO WHAT THEY CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE DONE HAD THEY BEEN IN OTHER LESS DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES."

--BERNAMA MORE HM 1250

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DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE BUSINESS WORLD OF MALAYSIA WAS DIVIDED INTO WATER-TIGHT COMPARTMENTS AND IT WAS UNTHINKABLE IN THOSE DAYS FOR THESE COMPARTMENTS TO BE BREACHED.

BUT THE GOVERNMENT POLICY HAD CHANGED ALL THAT.

HE ADDED: "IF WE LOOK AROUND WE WILL SEE THAT THE FIRMS WHICH HAVE BROKEN THIS TRADITION OF RACIAL EXCLUSIVENESS HAVE NOT FAILED. INDEED THEY HAVE SUCCEEDED VERY WELL.

"TODAY THE GREAT EUROPEAN FIRMS NOT ONLY HAVE MALAYSIAN EXECUTIVES AT ALL LEVELS BUT SOME HAVE BEEN PARTIALLY ACQUIRED BY MALAYSIANS.

"EVEN CHINESE FAMILY FIRMS HAVE CONVERTED TO PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANIES AND TAKEN IN NON-CHINESE EMPLOYEES AND, FAR FROM LOSING, THEY HAVE GROWN INTO MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR CONCERNS ENGAGED IN ASSEMBLY AND MANUFACTURING.

"ALL THESE COULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED BUT FOR GOVERNMENT POLICY."

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR POINTED OUT THAT WHAT WAS MORE IMPORTANT WAS THAT THE SUCCESS OF THESE FIRMS HAD NAILED A NUMBER OF FALSE PREMISES SUCH AS FAMILY BUSINESS WAS THE ONLY WAY TO RUN A BUSINESS, THAT BUSINESS MUST BE BASED ON RACIAL EXCLUSIVENESS AND THAT SOME RACES COULD NEVER SUCCEED IN BUSINESSES.

--BERNAMA MORE HM 1300

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DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ALSO SAID THAT OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT POLICY HAD AT TIMES RESULTED IN ATTEMPTS TO SPIKE THE GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN FOR MORE INVESTMENT BY FOREIGN COMPANIES AND THIS WAS MOST UNFORTUNATE.

HE SAID IN FACT PEOPLE MOST LIKELY TO LOSE BY THE CONSEQUENT REDUCTION OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT WERE THOSE WHO TRY TO SPIKE THE GOVERNMENT'S GOOD INTENTIONS.

THIS WAS BECAUSE ALL FOREIGN INVESTMENTS MUST BENEFIT LOCAL BUSINESS WHETHER BY WAY OF JOINT VENTURES, CONSTRUCTION OR SUPPLY CONTRACTS OR JOB OPPORTUNITIES.

OBVIOUSLY THOSE MOST LIKELY TO BENEFIT WERE THE PEOPLE MOST READY AND ABLE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THESE FOREIGN INVESTORS.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS INTERESTED IN INVESTMENT NOT BECAUSE OF TAXES BUT MORE BECAUSE OF CREATING JOBS FOR THE PEOPLE TO MAINTAIN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STABILITY.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR STRESSED THAT THERE WAS A NEED FOR EVERYONE TO THINK CAREFULLY AND TO MAKE THE PROPER ASSESSMENTS BASED ON THE TRUTH AND HARD FACTS.

HE ADDED: "INSTEAD OF CONDEMNING POLICIES, STUDIES SHOULD BE MADE ON HOW TO GAIN MOST OUT OF THEM. THERE SHOULD BE NO FEAR TO RECOGNISE FACTS AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE EXPERIENCE OF THOSE WHO HAVE GAINED BY ACCEDING TO GOVERNMENT POLICIES."

--BERNAMA MORE

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HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT AS THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA WAS A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT, IT WOULD BE SUICIDAL FOR IT TO FAVOUR AND PROTECT ONE COMMUNITY ALONE.

"IF IT WISHES TO SURVIVE, IT MUST BE FAIR TO EVERYONE AS FAR AS IS POSSIBLE," HE CONTINUED.

"HOWEVER, THERE ARE PEOPLE IN EVERY COMMUNITY WHO REFUSE TO SEE THE NEED FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE FAIR TO ALL.

"THEY ARE ALWAYS URGING THE GOVERNMENT TO ATTEND ONLY TO THEIR OWN NEEDS. IN ORDER TO GET SUPPORT THEY TEND TO IDENTIFY THEIR PRIVATE PROBLEMS WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES PROBLEMS."

"HE WARNED THAT THESE PEOPLE ARE A DANGER TO THE WELL-BEING OF MALAYSIA.

"IF WE PANDER TO THEM THEN THE STABILITY, BOTH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC, OF MALAYSIA WILL BE DESTROYED.

"WHEN THIS HAPPENS ALL OF US WILL SUFFER."

—BERNAMA MORE HM 1305

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EARLIER DATUK WONG TOK CHAI, CHAIRMAN OF THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE, SAID THE OVER-EMPHASIS OF BUMIPUTRA INTERESTS UNDER THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY HAD LEFT MANY NON-BUMIPUTRAS FRUSTRATED.

HE SAID: "WE SUPPORT EFFORTS TO ENHANCE THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF BUMIPUTRAS, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT IN THE PROCESS OF REALISING BUMIPUTRA PARTICIPATION, THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER COMMUNITIES SHOULD NOT BE SACRIFICED OR HINDERED."

DATUK WONG HOPED THE CONFERENCE WOULD HIGHLIGHT PROBLEMS FACED BY THE CHINESE COMMUNITY SO THAT THEY COULD BE FULLY UNDERSTOOD BY THE GOVERNMENT.

HE ALSO HOPED SOLUTION COULD BE FOUND TO ENABLE THE COMMUNITY TO PLAY A MORE MEANINGFUL ROLE TOWARDS THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY.

ABOUT 800 DELEGATES ARE TAKING PART IN THE CONFERENCE WHICH WAS ORGANISED BY THE ASSOCIATED CHINESE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY.