

KUALA LUMPUR, MAY 26 (BERNAMA) — ASEAN MUST DEVELOP IN THE ASEAN WAY — WITH ASEAN VALUES INTACT, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER (DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID HERE TODAY.

POINTING OUT THAT THE CHALLENGES FACING THE ASSOCIATION IN THE 1980'S WERE IMMENSE, INCLUDING ITS INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, HE SAID CONSULTATION, RESPECT FOR THE VIEWS OF OTHERS AND TOLERANCE HAD ALWAYS BEEN THE BASIS OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN ASEAN SOCIETIES.

+LET THESE TRADITIONAL VALUES HAVE THEIR PROPER PLACE IN OUR LABOUR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS. LET NOT ABSOLUTE MATERIALISM REIGN SUPREME,+  
HE ADDED.

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, WHO WAS OPENING THE TWO-DAY THIRD ASEAN LABOUR MINISTERS' CONFERENCE HERE, SAID WHILE CONFRONTATION MUST GIVE WAY TO COOPERATION, THE REAL STRENGTH OF ASEAN LABOUR RELATIONS LAY IN THE RICH RESERVOIR OF VALUES AND WORK ETHICS THAT WERE FOUND IN THE ASEAN INDIGENOUS CULTURES. — BERNAMA MORE 1426/LK

NO23: (F)

MAHATHIR-LABOUR 2 KUALA LUMPUR

ASEAN, HE SAID, MUST LEARN FROM THE MISTAKES OF THE DEVELOPED NATIONS AND MAKE USE OF THE SLACK IN THEIR ECONOMIC RECOVERY TO ITS ADVANTAGE.

+TRADE UNIONS AND MANAGERMENTS MUST NOT FALL INTO THE WELL-WORN GROOVES OF THEIR WESTERN COUNTERPARTS IN THEIR APPROACH TOWARDS THE RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES.

+THE ECONOMIC COST OF A SUSTAINED INDUSTRIAL STRIFE TO A DEVELOPING NATION IS TOO GREAT,+ HE ADDED.

STRESSING THAT THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CLIMATE IN THE 1980'S WAS OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION OF THE ASEAN REGION, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MODERN INDUSTRY DEMANDED A RESPONSIVE LABOUR FORCE AND AN ENLIGHTENED MANAGEMENT WHICH RECOGNISED THAT A CONTENTED WORKFORCE WOULD BE MORE PRODUCTIVE THAN A DISSATISFIED ONE.

+INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CAN NO LONGER BE BASED ON THE CAPACITY TO DO THE GREATEST AMOUNT OF DAMAGE.

+IN A WORLD SAID TO BE GOVERNED BY REASON AND LOGIC SUCH A BASIS FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES IS TOO PRIMITIVE,+ HE SAID.

— BERNAMA MORE 1429/LK

HE SAID THIS WAS WHY THE ASEAN GOVERNMENTS HAD CHOSEN TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: AS THE CUSTODIAN OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE GOVERNMENTS COULD NOT AFFORD TO BE SPECTATORS WHEN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES COULD BE JEOPARDISED BY WASTEFUL AND PROTRACTED LABOUR DISPUTES.

HE SAID ONE WOULD NOTICE THE SHIFT IN THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES OF ASEAN OVER THE YEARS FROM PURELY ECONOMIC GROWTH TO A FAIRER AND MORE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF GOODS AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

WITH THIS SHIFT FROM PURELY ECONOMIC POLICY TO INCREASING ATTENTION TO SOCIAL RESTRUCTURING, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE ROLE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND MANPOWER HAD CHANGED RAPIDLY.

+WHAT USED TO BE A GOVERNMENT TOOL MAINLY FOR THE PROTECTION OF WORKERS THROUGH THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LABOUR STANDARDS AND SETTLEMENT OF LABOUR DISPUTES, HAS NOW EVOLVED INTO SOMETHING MUCH BROADER, EXTENDING INTO PROBLEMS OF EMPLOYMENT POLICY, TRAINING AND THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF THE UNORGANISED SECTOR, SOCIAL SECURITY AND OTHER MATTERS. — BERNAMA MORE 1433/LK

NO25: (F)

MAHATHIR-LABOUR 4 KUALA LUMPUR

+IT IS THIS DISTRIBUTIVE DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE QUALITY OF WORK AND THE PERFORMANCE OF LABOUR IN THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS THAT WOULD POSE A CHALLENGE TO THE MINISTERIES OF LABOUR IN THE NEXT DECADE,+ HE ADDED.

EARLIER, THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER IDENTIFIED THE MANY PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE ECONOMIES AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES OF THE ASEAN FIVE.

AMONG THEM WERE THE WORLDWIDE RECESSION, THE HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES, THE TRADITIONAL TIE-UP OF THE ASEAN ECONOMIES TO THEIR FORMER COLONIAL RULERS AND PROTECTIONISM.

HE, HOWEVER, STRESSED THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR ASEAN IN THE 1980'S WERE FUNDAMENTALLY BRIGHT IF THE RIGHT OPTIONS WERE SELECTED AND IMPLEMENTED.

EVEN THOUGH THE COLONIAL MASTERS WERE GONE, HE SAID THE DISTORTION OF THE LAW OF COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE HAD BEEN PERPETUATED. — BERNAMA MORE 1435/LK

NO26: (F)

MAHATHIR-LABOUR 5 KUALA LUMPUR

THE PROTECTIONISM IMPOSED BY THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IN THE 1960'S AS A TEMPORARY MEASURE HAD NOW BECOME A PERMANENT FEATURE OF WORLD TRADE, AND THE +LOW WAGE+ OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WAS PERCEIVED AS A +THREAT+.

THERE HAD BEEN CLAIMS THAT TRADE WAS +UNFAIR+ TO THE MORE INDUSTRIALISED NATION, AND +TO MANY OF US THIS SEEMS RATHER LIKE A MAN COMPLAINING ABOUT BEING RAPED BY A WOMAN,+ HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID ASEAN MUST NOT BE CAUGHT IN THE VICIOUS TRAP OF COMPETING WITH EACH OTHER THOUGH THEY HAD SIMILAR RAW MATERIALS.

+ASEAN HAS AN OBLIGATION TO DEMONSTRATE THE INAPPLICABILITY OF THE ECONOMIC NATION THAT SINCE THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURES OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ARE ALL SIMILAR - THEY MUST THEREFORE BE PITTED AGAINST EACH OTHER,+ HE ADDED.

THE TWO-DAY CONFERENCE, WHICH IS CHAIRED BY LABOUR AND MANPOWER MINISTER DATUK RICHARD HO, IS ATTENDED BY THE MINISTER OF MANPOWER AND TRANSMIGRATION OF INDONESIA, PROFESSOR HARUN A. ZAIN, THE LABOUR MINISTER OF THE PHILIPPINES, ENCIK BLAS F. OPLE, THE LABOUR MINISTER OF SINGAPORE, ENCIK ONG PANG BOON, AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERIOR OF THAILAND, ENCIK KASEM SIRISUMPUNH. — BERNAMA 1439/LK