

Problems of co-ops resolved, says PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Problems of poor and ineffective management which plagued the co-operative movement in the past have been overcome, Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said.

In his National Co-operative Day souvenir programme message, Dr Mahathir observed that the movement had received overwhelming support from the public.

This success, he said, reflected the strength and effectiveness of the co-operative management.

"Of course, at one time there were a number of complaints from members who were not satisfied with the running of certain co-operatives.

"This problem is no longer evident."

Celebrations for the national-level International Co-operative Day was launched by Deputy Prime Minister **Datuk Musa Hitam** in Johore Baru yesterday.

On this year's celebration theme, *Co-operatives Uphold Democracy*, Dr Mahathir said the theme is appropriate and timely.

He said the role and contributions of co-operatives in assisting to strengthen the nation's economy are greatly appreciated.

However, each co-operative member must ensure that the movement in the country remains firm and continues to be strong.

Meanwhile, in the same souvenir programme National and Rural Development Minister **Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid** said co-

operatives must be supervised by those who were elected through the democratic process.

"Members of a co-operative also have the same right, irrespective of the number of shares they own in the co-operative.

"However, to ensure the success of the bigger co-operatives, the management must be by professionals but the supervision must be maintained in the hands of the elected committee members."

He also agreed with the proposal that employees of co-operatives be discouraged from becoming members of their respective organisations.

In this context, he proposed that the employees of co-operatives be allowed to set up their own Workers Investment Co-operatives (KPP) through which they can buy shares.

The KPP, he added, could send its representatives to attend the general meetings.

The Minister also urged co-operatives whose members are scattered all over the country to amend their by-laws to provide for a delegates system in which members at State and district levels are allowed to have their own general meetings to appoint delegates to the general meeting at central level.

In this way, a member who has a small share would not use up his dividend on expenses to attend general meetings.

"At the same time, he will not lose his democratic right as he has a platform at the lower level and through his elected representative has a voice at the national level."

The Director-General of the Co-operative Development Department, **Haji Abdul Aziz Abdul Wahab**, said there are nearly 2,300 co-operatives in the country with 2.5 million members.

In addition, about \$820 million in capital has been paid by members. Assets of the co-operatives are about \$3,500 million.