

DEVELOPED COUNTRIES UNDER FIRE

KUALA LUMPUR, NOV. 20 (BERNAMA ES)--- THE PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMED TODAY STRONGLY CRITICISED SOME OF THE MEASURES TAKEN BY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WHICH WOULD CONDEMN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO PERMANENT POVERTY.

HE CALLED UPON THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO PUT A STOP TO THE FEAR AND CONSEQUENT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

ACCORDING TO HIM, SOME OF THE MEASURES TAKEN BY THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WOULD PREVENT EARLY METAMORPHOSIS AMONG THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND CONDEMN THEM TO PERMANENT POVERTY.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR WAS SPEAKING AT THE OPENING OF THE COLOMBO PLAN CONSULTATIVE MEETING HERE TODAY.

HE NOTED THAT SOME DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HAD UNDERGONE METAMORPHOSIS AND NOW HAD THE KNOW-HOW TO PROCESS SOME OF THEIR OWN RAW MATERIALS INTO VALUE-ADDED EXPORTS.

+UNFORTUNATELY THE GREAT ADVOCATES OF FREE TRADE AMONG THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES HAVE NOW DECIDED THAT, FREE TRADE IS NOT SO GOOD AFTER ALL, +HE ADDED.

+NOT ONLY THAT, SOME HAVE GANGED UP INTO ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES WHOSE SOLE INTENTION IS TO DENY ACCESS TO GOODS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. -AND ALL THE WHILE, THE TRADING IN PRIMARY COMMODITIES IS STILL CONTROLLED BY THEM THROUGH EXCLUSIVE MARKETING CLUBS.+

HE CAUTIONED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THAT THE MERE PRODUCTION OF PRIMARY COMMODITIES WOULD NEVER TRANSFORM THEM INTO DEVELOPED COUNTRIES.

THE METAMORPHOSIS COULD ONLY COME ABOUT IF THEY WENT INTO PROCESSING AND MANUFACTURING.

THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE SAME TIME POINTED OUT THAT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WOULD NEVER DISPLACE THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AS THE MAJOR PRODUCERS OF MANUFACTURED GOODS.

HE SAID THESE COUNTRIES WOULD STILL BE CONFINED TO THE LESS SOPHISTICATED MAINLY LABOUR-INTENSIVE INDUSTRIES AND AS SUCH WOULD COMPLEMENT THE INDUSTRIES OF THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES.

BUT HE WAS CONFIDENT OF THEM GETTING THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME RICHER AND +MOST CERTAINLY+ BETTER CUSTOMERS OF THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES.

+THEREFORE, THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES SHOULD NOT ONLY ACCEPT THE METAMORPHOSIS THAT IS GOING ON IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES BUT SHOULD ACTUALLY ASSIST IN THE PROCESS.+

DATUKSERI DR MAHATHIR STRESSED THE NEED FOR FORWARD AND BACKWARD INTEGRATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AS MANY OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HAD ABUNDANT SUPPLIES OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

HOWEVER, THEIR EFFORTS COULD BE FRUSTRATED BY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES THROUGH IMPOSITION OF HIGHER TARIFF ON PROCESSED RAW MATERIALS! FOR EXAMPLE, PALM OIL, AND ALSO THROUGH THE CONTROL OF FREIGHT RATES, SHIPPING AND INSURANCE OR THROUGH QUOTA.

+DESPITE THESE UNFAIR TRADING PRACTICES THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES MUST PERSIST AND REDUCE THEIR COST AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO COMPETE WITH THE PRODUCTS PROCESSED IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, + HE ADDED.

NOTING THAT THERE STILL EXISTED WIDE DISPARITIES IN THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE COLOMBO PLAN DEVELOPING MEMBER COUNTRIES, WITH SOME COUNTRIES HAVING PER CAPITA GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT (GNP) OF BELOW US\$100, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID MORE REMAINED TO BE DONE AND ON A LARGER SCALE THAN IN THE PAST TO RECTIFY THIS INEQUALITY.

HE ALSO DREW ATTENTION TO THE SUBSTANTIAL GAP BETWEEN THE DEVELOPED MEMBER COUNTRIES AND THE VERY POOR DEVELOPING ONES.

HE BELIEVED THAT AS LONG AS THERE WERE LARGE DISPARITIES IN THE LEVELS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN NATIONS, THE WORK OF THE COLOMBO PLAN COULD NOT BE DEEMED TO BE OVER.

+WHILE EACH MEMBER COUNTRY SETS ITS OWN PRIORITIES IN ACHIEVING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS ALL MEMBER COUNTRIES, I AM SURE, RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR CLOSE COOPERATION AND SINCERE SHARING OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES INVOLVED IN THE CREATION OF A MORE EQUITABLE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ORDER.+

-PERNAMA 'ES