

R E617 A A E '
MAHATHIR-COLOMBO PLAN : 84

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KUALA LUMPUR, NOV. 5 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY MALAYSIA IS FULLY COMMITTED TO THE COLOMBO PLAN AND EXPECTS OTHER COUNTRIES TO BE EQUALLY COMMITTED.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID MALAYSIA WAS RENEWING THE PLEDGE IN VIEW OF THE +LUKEWARM ATTITUDE+ OF SOME COUNTRIES TOWARDS THE COLOMBO PLAN WHICH WAS LAUNCHED IN 1951.

HE SAID THAT CERTAIN COUNTRIES WERE NOT LOOKING UP TO THE COLOMBO PLAN LIKE THEY USED TO.

+IT IS IMPORTANT TO SAY THAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE COLOMBO PLAN IN ORDER TO GET OTHERS TO BE FULLY COMMITTED,+ HE TOLD REPORTERS AFTER OPENING THE 30TH COLOMBO PLAN CONSULTATIVE MEETING AT HILTON HOTEL HERE.

HE WAS ELABORATING ON HIS SPEECH DURING WHICH HE REAFFIRMED MALAYSIA'S COMMITMENT TO THE COLOMBO PLAN AND ITS SPIRIT OF INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP, MUTUAL COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING. --

DATUKSERI DR. MAHATHIR ALSO URGED ALL MEMBER COUNTRIES TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A FAVOURABLE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FOR RAPID AND SUSTAINED ECONOMIC GROWTH.

SUCH AN ENVIRONMENT SHOULD, AMONG OTHER THINGS, SEEK TO PROVIDE:

CONTINUED ACCESS TO MARKETS BY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES; RELATIVELY STABLE AND RENUMERATIVE COMMODITY PRICES; STABLE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY CONDITIONS, FACILITATION OF CAPITAL AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER" AND AN EFFECTIVE PROCESS FOR INTERNATIONAL ADJUSTMENT.

HE ALSO VOICED THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES' NEED TO MOVE QUICKLY TOWARDS IMPROVING EFFICIENCY IN MOBILISING THEIR RESOURCES AND ACQUIRING SKILLS TO ACHIEVE, A HIGHER LEVEL OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT.

AS SUCH, HE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING AN INDIGENOUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (R&D) BASE AS A NECESSARY PREREQUISITE FOR SUCCESSFUL ASSIMILATION OF TECHNOLOGY FROM THE INDUSTRIALISED DEVELOPED COUNTRIES.

+BY INCREASING THE LEVEL OF +ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY+ OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THROUGH VIGOROUS SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL MANPOWER TRAINING PROGRAMMES, I AM CONVINCED THAT EVEN AS LATE STARTERS³ IT IS POSSIBLE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO LEAP-FROG A FEW STAGES OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND APPLY SOME OF THE LATEST TECHNOLOGIES IN... THEIR INDUSTRIES,+ HE ADDED.

HE BELIEVED THIS WOULD HELP THEM TO BECOME MORE COMPETITIVE AND WOULD IN FACT CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS LOWERING LIVING COSTS EVEN IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WHERE WAGE LEVELS AND OTHER COSTS HAD MADE THE PRODUCTION OF CERTAIN ITEMS NO LONGER ECONOMIC.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IN THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, MOST OF THE R & D ACTIVITIES WERE FINANCED AND CONDUCTED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR, ESPECIALLY IN THE RESEARCH LABORATORIES OF THEIR MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATIONS.

WHATEVER LITTLE R & D ACTIVITIES THAT TOOK PLACE IN SOME DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OCCURRED IN RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR AND IN MANY INSTANCES WERE DEVOTED TO BASIC RESEARCH, LIMITED IN THEIR SCOPE AND INDUSTRIAL APPLICATIONS.

+IT MAY BE A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION IF GOVERNMENTS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WORK CLOSELY WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO GEAR THEIR R & D ACTIVITIES IN AREAS WHERE THERE ARE EXTENSIVE POTENTIALS TO BE COMMERCIALY APPLIED.+

THE PRIME MINISTER SUGGESTED THAT IT WAS PERHAPS USEFUL TO MAKE IT MANDATORY FOR JOINT-VENTURE AGREEMENTS IN SPECIFIC INDUSTRIES TO INCLUDE R & D.

HE NOTED THAT THE ADVANTAGES OF SUCH AN APPROACH HAD BEEN WELL ILLUSTRATED BY THE EXPERIENCE OF SOME MEMBER COUNTRIES,

INDEED, ACCORDING TO HIM, IN THESE COUNTRIES⁹ SUCCESSFUL TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY IN MANY OF THE INDUSTRIAL FIELDS SUCH AS ELECTRONICS, SHIP BUILDING AND THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES WERE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH ENSURING THAT JOINT VENTURE AGREEMENTS CONTAINED MANDATORY CONDITIONS ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF R & D FACILITIES. -- BERNAMA.

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