

# Govt to review policy on subsidies

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — The Government will review the policy of providing subsidies and other financial assistance to get rid of the subsidy-mentality among certain groups of people, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said that although the Government was very concerned over the people's welfare, it did not want a Malaysian society which was over-dependent on the Government or on organisations.

"It is our goal to create a self-reliant Malaysian society," he said when opening the national welfare seminar at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

The two-day seminar, organised by the Welfare Services Ministry, the National Welfare Foundation and National Welfare Council, is to discuss the need for a National Welfare Policy.

However, the Prime Minister said, some people had already become over-dependent on subsidies and other financial aid.

"Those who often depend on government aid may appear to be strong for the time being.

"But eventually their resilience will weaken.

"They will no longer have the initiative to become self-reliant, start a job which can benefit them and their family, and struggle to uphold their dignity without help from other people or the Government," he said.

Dr Mahathir said they would also lose the spirit to

help themselves.

He said the Government would "gradually reduce this subsidy-mentality or dole-mentality for the good of the community."

"The type of subsidy will be reviewed to ensure that it will not create a habit of depending on subsidy among the people," he said.

In this respect, he said, the Government had stressed that all subsidies and aid given out would

only be to the extent of helping an individual to start off his activities which were productive.

He said this could be seen through the subsidies it had previously given to the farmers, fishermen and some of the rural folks.

The review, he added, also applied to all other sectors.

On welfare aid, the Prime Minister said he realised they could not be likened to

the subsidies given to farmers, fishermen and the poor.

He said the Government realised that those who needed welfare aid included the handicapped, the blind and the less fortunate.

The Prime Minister also said he was happy with the "rapid" development of welfare services in the country because it reflected the people's awareness of their responsibility to the less fortunate.