

R E468 AAE
 MAHATHIR-POVERTY
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KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT 12 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY A DETAILED STUDY SHOULD BE MADE TO DETERMINE WHY POVERTY STILL EXISTS IN THE COUNTRY DESPITE NUMEROUS EFFORTS BY THE GOVERNMENT TO OVERCOME IT.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE GOVERNMENT MANAGED TO REDUCE THE POVERTY RATE IN THE COUNTRY TO 18 PERCENT IN 1984 FROM 49.3 PERCENT IN 1970 BUT THIS, HE ADDED, WAS BELOW EXPECTATION BASED ON THE EFFORTS MADE AND MONEY SPENT.

+ONE REASON HAMPERING THE SUCCESS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POVERTY ERADICATION EFFORTS IS THAT THE PEOPLE RECEIVING AID COULD NOT OR DID NOT USE IT EFFECTIVELY DUE TO THE LACK OF INTEREST OR CAPABILITY,+ HE SAID WHEN OPENING AN UMNO YOUTH CONVENTION ON POVERTY HERE.

HE ALSO LAUNCHED THE GUIDELINES FOR ADOPTION OF VILLAGES UNDER UMNO YOUTH'S POVERTY ERADICATION PROGRAMME.

ABOUT 500 PEOPLE FROM THE MOVEMENT AND HEADS OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES ATTENDED THE ONE-DAY CONVENTION. -- MORE
 1318MST 12 09 87

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HOWEVER THAT POVERTY IN MALAYSIA WAS NOT AT A LEVEL WHERE PEOPLE WERE STARVING.

THERE WERE GROUPS OF PEOPLE WITHOUT AN INCOME AND WHO HAD TO BEG FOR A LIVING BUT THEIR NUMBER WAS SMALL, HE ADDED.

+OTHERS ARE ONLY RELATIVELY POOR, THAT IS POOR COMPARED WITH THE RICH,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT THE 18 PERCENT IN THE POVERTY GROUP DID NOT FACE STARVATION, OR WERE NOT DENIED SCHOOLING, MEDICAL OR TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES.

+THE POOR IN THIS COUNTRY CAN STILL ENJOY SOME OF THE BASIC NEEDS OF LIFE AND FACILITIES PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT FROM THE SECOND MALAYSIA PLAN (1971-1975) UNTIL NOW, THE CONCEPT OF POVERTY AND STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME IT WERE CONSTANTLY BEING REVIEWED AND IMPROVED FOR THE WELL-BEING OF THE PEOPLE. -- MORE
 1331MST 12 09 87

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 MAHATHIR-POVERTY 3 KUALA LUMPUR

HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH POVERTY ERADICATION EFFORTS WERE FOCUSED MORE ON THE RURAL AREAS WHERE THE POVERTY RATE WAS HIGHER, THE URBAN AREAS WERE NOT BEING NEGLECTED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT CONSTANTLY REVIEWED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ITS POVERTY ERADICATION PROGRAMMES AND MADE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE STRATEGIES FROM TIME TO TIME.

BASIC FEATURES SUCH AS EFFORTS TO INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY AND INCOME, INVOLVE THE PEOPLE IN MODERN SECTORS AND MORE PROFITABLE VENTURES, CREATE MORE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND PROVIDE INFRASTRUCTURE WOULD BE MAINTAINED, HE ADDED.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THERE WAS SUCCESS IN POVERTY ERADICATION, THERE WERE STILL MANY PEOPLE WHO REMAINED IN THE POVERTY BRACKET.

+WHY IS IT THAT GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO ERADICATE POVERTY ARE NOT SO SUCCESSFUL, IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG WITH OUR STRATEGIES?+ -- MORE
 1351MST 12 09 87

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R E471 AAE
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HE SAID THIS QUESTION SHOULD BE ANALYSED BY ALL QUARTERS AND STRESSED THAT +ALL EFFORTS TO ERADICATE POVERTY WILL BE IN VAIN IF WE FIRST DO NOT KNOW THE REASONS FOR POVERTY.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD TRIED TO INTRODUCE MODERN FARMING METHODS AND INTEGRATED FARMING, SET UP SMALL INDUSTRIES AND FORMED COOPERATIVES TO MARKET FERTILISER AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL NEEDS.

BUT GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ALONE WERE NOT ENOUGH TO OVERCOME THE POVERTY PROBLEM, HE SAID.

+THE POOR TOO HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO IMPROVE THEIR LIVING STANDARDS,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID A COUNTRY WITH FERTILE LAND AND ENDOWED WITH GOLD AND SILVER WOULD STILL REMAIN BACKWARD IF THE PEOPLE ONLY DEPENDED ON OTHERS FOR HELP.

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1407MST 12 09 87

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R E472 AAE
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+A COUNTRY AND COMMUNITY WHICH IS DILIGENT AND WILLING TO FACE CHALLENGES WILL SUCCEED AND PROGRESS,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR PRAISED UMNO YOUTH FOR HOLDING THE CONVENTION, SAYING THE GOVERNMENT WOULD STUDY THE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED.

EARLIER, ACTING UMNO YOUTH LEADER DATUK SERI NAJIB TUN RAZAK SAID THE MOVEMENT HAD IDENTIFIED 113 POOR VILLAGES FOR ADOPTION UNDER ITS POVERTY ERADICATION PROJECT.

UNDER THE PROJECT, THE MOVEMENT WILL GET SEVERAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES TO CONCENTRATE THEIR ACTIVITIES IN THE VILLAGES.

UMNO YOUTH LEADERS WILL ALSO ACT TO ENCOURAGE THE VILLAGERS TO BE MORE SELF-RELIANT AND FULLY UTILISE THE RESOURCES IN THEIR AREAS.

-- BERNAMA

1408MST 12 09 87