

MAHATHIR-COMMONWEALTH

BM

KUALA LUMPUR, OCT 11 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY MANY OF THE PEOPLE IN COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES HAVE YET TO GET ANY BENEFIT FROM THE GROUPINGS'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRAMMES.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID MALAYSIA HOPES VERY MUCH THAT THE COMMONWEALTH WILL BE ABLE TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE ROLE IN OVERCOMING THE VARIOUS GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY POVERTY.

OPENING THE +COMMONWEALTH NOW+ EXHIBITION AT MUZIUM NEGARA IN CONJUNCTION WITH NEXT WEEK'S COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING (CHOGM) HERE, HE SAID:

+ALTHOUGH THE COMMONWEALTH IS ACTIVE IN RESOLVING VARIOUS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS FACED BY ITS MEMBER COUNTRIES THROUGH PROGRAMMES FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, HEALTH, EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE AND SPORTS, THERE ARE STILL INDICATIONS THAT THESE PROGRAMMES ARE STILL NOT BENEFITTING MOST OF THE PEOPLE WHO SHOULD BE BENEFITTING FROM THEM.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE COMMONWEALTH IS A UNIQUE GROUPING BECAUSE IT IS ONE OF THE FEW BODIES OUTSIDE THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANISATION THAT IS MADE UP OF COUNTRIES THAT ARE DEVELOPED, DEVELOPING AND POOR. -- MORE

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+THIS MEANS THE COMMONWEALTH BRINGS TOGETHER HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE FROM COUNTRIES THAT ARE THE RICHEST AND THE POOREST IN THE WORLD,+ HE SAID. PEOPLE IN THE COMMONWEALTH WERE ALSO FROM VARIOUS RACES AND ETHNIC GROUPS SPEAKING A WHOLE ARRAY OF LANGUAGES AND PRACTISING A HOST OF BELIEFS AND CULTURES.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID CITIZENS OF EACH MEMBER COUNTRY WERE FREE TO CHOOSE, INSTALL AND PRACTISE THEIR OWN STYLE OF ADMINISTRATION BASED ON THE PHILOSOPHY AND IDEALS CONTAINED IN THE DECLARATION OF COMMONWEALTH PRINCIPLES.

ON THE EXHIBITION, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID SINCE THE COMMONWEALTH WAS FORMED IN 1948, THOUSANDS OF INTERESTING HAPPENINGS HAVE BEEN RECORDED SUCH AS OF NATIONS GAINING INDEPENDENCE, BUT THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN EVENTS THAT HAVE BEEN IGNORED OR KNOWN TO ONLY A FEW AS RECORDS OF THEM WERE STASHED AWAY DEEP INSIDE ARCHIVES.

HE HOPED THE EXHIBITION WOULD ENABLE VISITORS TO LEARN ABOUT THE COMMONWEALTH, ITS OBJECTIVES AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PEOPLE AND COUNTRIES OF THE GROUPING.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR THEN VIEWED THE EXHIBITS ACCOMPANIED BY CULTURE AND TOURISM MINISTER DATUK SABBARUDDIN CHIK, MUSEUM DIRECTOR-GENERAL DATUK SHAHRUM YOB AND DIPLOMATS OF COMMONWEALTH NATIONS HERE.

THE EXHIBITION WAS A JOINT EFFORT OF THE CHOGM SECRETARIAT, THE COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE IN LONDON AND MUZIUM NEGARA. A SOUVENIR BOOK, ALSO TITLED +COMMONWEALTH NOW+, HAS BEEN PUBLISHED AS A GENERAL REFERENCE MATERIAL CONCERNING CHOGM. -- BERNAMA

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