

Cast aside own interests, groups told Draw up policy acceptable to all

831 20 JAN 1989

HUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on all groups to cast aside their own interests and work together in formulating an economic policy acceptable to the people.

In his speech, delivered by his deputy Ghafar Baba at the launching of the 150-member Post-1990 National Economic Consultative Council (NECC), Dr Mahathir said:

"...the Government pleads with all parties, whether they are members of the council or not, to give their fullest and serious attention to the task at hand.

"Accept this approach from the Government as this is a sincere effort to get as many people as possible to be involved in determining the destiny of this country."

Members of the council who represent

NET

On Page 2

- WHAT THE MEMBERS SAY**
- GOVT HAS DONE ITS PART BY INVITING D A.P**
- V. DAVID STAYS AWAY**
- PROFILES OF THE CHAIRMAN AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

On Page 10

- TEXT OF PM'S SPEECH**

a cross section of the population will deliberate on the formulation of an economic policy to serve the country after 1990.

Dr Mahathir, touching on the eradication of poverty which is one of the pillars of the existing New Economic Policy (NEP), commented that this objective was unrealistic.

He noted that poverty existed even in

the developed world, including the United States, Japan and Europe.

However, he said, man can reduce poverty to a level where no one dies of hunger.

"With the people's perseverance and responsible administration, poverty can be reduced but relative poverty will still exist; he added.

Dr Mahathir said the New Economic Policy which ends in 1990 has helped bring the country significant economic success even though certain quarters held the view that the success rate could have been higher if there was no such policy.

"The fact is that Malaysia has achieved high economic achievements compared with other nations which have no elements such as the interfering NEP, as some people describe it."

He noted that a nation's economic policy is not a small matter which can be

★ **TURN TO PAGE 2, COL 5**

Councilmembers will face many problems, says PM

NST 20 JAN 1989

★ FROM PAGE ONE

easily formulated. A plural society's economic policy, as is the case with Malaysia, is even more difficult to plan because its thrust is not just towards economic growth.

It also takes into account the political and social consideration of the various ethnic groups with their respective problems and interests.

Members of the council will therefore encounter numerous problems and complexities when they sit down to formulate a policy which is acceptable to the rakyat.

Having succeeded in gaining independence, Dr Mahathir said the country has to shoulder its own failures and take full responsibility for them because it can no longer put the blame on its colonial masters.

But the Prime Minister said the Government is sad that certain groups have tried to **politicise** the formation of the council which is entrusted with helping to come up with policies to determine the economic destiny of the country.

He said: "They have tried to relate the council's membership to their own political interests. They try to promote their own political interests by **capitalising on** the Government's invitation asking them to help in determining the nation's future.

"They try to undermine the Government's effort which far exceeds the normal bounds of democratic liberty.

"The Government fears that if this attitude persists, this noble exercise will fail. The Government cannot and should not be blamed and held responsible should this happen."