

D585

R E 240 A A E
MAHATHIR-NIC

KUALA LUMPUR, AUG '7 (BERNAMA) -- COUNTRIES CATEGORISED AS NEWLY INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES (NICS) FACE A POSSIBLE REDUCTION OF THEIR COMPETITIVENESS AND ACCESS TO MARKETS AND CHANCES ARE THAT THEY WILL DIMINISH WITH THE STATUS AND NEVER BECOME FULLY DEVELOPED! THE PRIME MINISTER SAID TODAY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD' ADDED THAT THE EFFECT OF BECOMING AN NIC WAS TO STUNT THE GROWTH OF THESE COUNTRIES AND EVEN THE BURDEN OF HELPING OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WAS PRESSED UPON THEM.

OUTLINING THE REASONS WHY MALAYSIA DID NOT ASPIRE TO BECOME AN NIC WHEN OPENING THE 10TH MALAYSIAN ECONOMIC CONVENTION HERE, HE SAID WHEN THE TERM NIC WAS FIRST USED BY THE WESTERN MEDIA IT WAS REGARDED AS COMPLIMENTARY AND LITERALLY A PAT ON THE BACK FOR UNDER-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES.

+BUT THE GROUP OF SEVEN RICH COUNTRIES SOON LATCHED ON TO THIS TERM TO PUT A BRAKE TO THE 'JOHNNIES COME LATELY' BY WHATEVER MEANS POSSIBLE,+ HE ADDED. JAPAN HAD CAUGHT THE RICH COUNTRIES UNAWARES AND THEY WERE NOT GOING TO LET ANYONE ELSE CATCH THEM NAPPING AGAIN, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID COUNTRIES CATEGORISED AS NICS HAD THEIR PRIVILEGES UNDER THE GENERALISED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES (GSP) WITHDRAWN AND EXPORT QUOTAS WERE IMPOSED ON THEM WHILE THEIR CURRENCIES WERE REVALUED AND THEIR SO-CALLED HUMAN RIGHTS RECORDS WERE SCRUTINISED +AND INVARIABLY FOUND WANTING+. -- MORE
1525MST 07 08 89

D586

R E 241 A A E
MAHATHIR-NIC 2 KUALA LUMPUR

HE ADDED THAT MALAYSIA WOULD ONE DAY REACH THE STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE SO-CALLED NICS. +BUT WE DO NOT NEED THE TITLE AND THERE SHOULD BE NO SUCH CATEGORISATION AND DISCRIMINATION SINCE EVERY COUNTRY SHOULD BE FREE TO GROW ECONOMICALLY AND BE AS RICH AS THE RICHEST OR RICHER STILL,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID MALAYSIA HAD BEEN INVITED TO CONFERENCES OF THE NIC'S, THE NEAR NIC'S AND THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND HAD REFUSED TO ATTEND BECAUSE +WE SEE IN THIS AN ATTEMPT TO CATEGORISE AND PENALISE US FOR OUR ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND TO STIFFLE OUR PROGRESS+.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ASKED WHY THERE SHOULD BE SUCH AN INTERMEDIATE CLASSIFICATION AND CATEGORISATION AS NIC SINCE, WHEN THE RICH COUNTRIES WERE ON THEIR WAY UP, NO ONE CALLED THEM BY SUCH A TERM OR PUT OBSTACLES IN THEIR PATH.

+WHAT RIGHT HAD THE RICH TO ARBITRARILY TAKE ACTION AGAINST ANY COUNTRY WHICH IS PROGRESSING WELL?+ HE QUESTIONED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MANY MALAYSIANS WERE ANXIOUS FOR THE COUNTRY TO BE CALLED AN NIC, BUT HE WARNED THAT IF MALAYSIA ACCEPTED THE LABEL IT MUST ALSO ACCEPT THE STRICTURES THAT WENT WITH IT. --

+MALAYSIA IS INTERESTED IN GROWING BUT THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES CAN KEEP THE TITLE AND WHAT GOES WITH IT,+ HE ADDED,

IN HIS SPEECH, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO TOUCHED ON SEVERAL ASPECTS OF ECONOMIC GLOBAL COMPETITION, THE INCREASING POLARISATION BY MAJOR ECONOMIC BLOCS, THE COUNTRY'S CURRENT ECONOMIC EXPANSION, THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY (NEP) AND THE POST-1990 ECONOMIC POLICY.

THE THREE-DAY CONVENTION, ORGANISED BY THE MALAYSIAN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION, IS BEING ATTENDED BY ABOUT 200 PARTICIPANTS. -- BERNAMA
1530MST 07 08 89