

But withdrawals from NECC prevented consensus, says PM

Economic proposals for 90s drawn up

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the National Economic Consultative Council (NECC) was able to come out with some economic proposals for the 1990s despite the withdrawal of certain representatives.

Their withdrawal from the plenary sessions of the council had prevented a consensus being reached on a definitive plan.

"However, the Government may not be able to accept all proposals due to the lack of consensus," he told the Dewan Negara when replying to Senator Dahalan Haji Embun.

Dr Mahathir said the pullout by this particular group of representatives showed that they were not interested in forging unity or formulating concrete development plans for the country because their primary objective was to gain influence and secure support for the coming general election.

There was no need to publicise this act because it is already well known to the people, he said when replying to a supplementary question by Senator Azman Atar Othman.

To an earlier supplementary question by Senator Sivalingam Arumugam Karupiah, Dr Mahathir said it would complicate matters if the economic policy for the 1990s was divided according to individual races.

He said the economic share has been explained earlier that it would pertain only to Bumiputeras and non-Bumiputeras.

There was no question of it being allocated for Malays and

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non-Malays, he said. Senator Sivalingam had claimed that the economic stake of Indians was "unclear" in the New Economic Policy.

Dr Mahathir said if the request were to be entertained, then the economic share of non-Bumiputeras like the Portugese and Siamese would have to be considered and at the same time, the interest of the Bumiputera communities like the Dusuns, Kadazans and Bajaus must also be attended.

"These communities would

then start demanding that they get their fair share and it would be difficult to settle their demands besides complicating matters," he added.

"The NECC have representatives from the Indian community to determine their stake in the new policies but the main issue would be whether they want to be separated from the mainstream policy of unity."

To the original question by Senator V.K. Sellapan, Dr Mahathir said the NECC, which had met 12 times, would continue meeting on Jan 17, 18 and 19 to discuss the proposals and summaries discussed at the five plenary sessions.

He said the reports accepted at the five sessions reflected the encouraging progress of the NECC.

He said all discussions on the committees reports have been completed except the committee on human resource development which will continue at its next plenary session.

Besides this, the specially formed National Unity Committee to study the NEP's effect on forging unity among the people has also completed its report which would be tabled at the next plenary session.

Dr Mahathir said the NECC will begin discussions on its full report after the plenary sessions where it would take into consideration all summaries and proposals by the five committees as well as the discussions, also by the plenary sessions.

He said the final report would be submitted to the Government after the council is satisfied with it.

"The Government will responsibly consider all views and proposals before a new policy after 1990 is announced. However, the Government has not decided whether to table the report in Parliament or make it public through the mass media."