

# PM's 'think small' advice hailed by women traders

NSunT 2 11 JUL 1990

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Women entrepreneurs have welcomed the Prime Minister's call for Bumiputera businessmen not to think big but to take progressive steps towards expansion.

They believed that while businessmen must think small, they "must have big dreams, big visions".

The head of the Association of Business and Professional Women in Selangor and the Federal Territory (Peniagawati), Hajah Faridah Shamsudin, said it was a "very sound advice" based on the experience faced by many entrepreneurs during the economic slowdown.

"There is much to be learnt from their experiences. It is a matter of taking a step and then growing from there, step by step.

"We must not be overwhelmed by quick success and returns because these do not last."

Hajah Faridah said many highly successful entrepreneurs and industrialists had humble beginnings.

She cited as an example banking magnate Tan Sri Azman Hashim, who by his own admission, took 22 years to be where he is today.

"His is an example of years of accumulating assets and savings," she said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had on Thursday called on Bumiputera businessmen to re-orientate their business philosophy by thinking small first instead of big.

He said they should make progressive steps to expand as highly successful businessmen in Taiwan, South Korea and Japan had done.

Dr Mahathir had said at the opening of the three-day National Symposium of Malaysian Women Entrepreneurs at the Putra World Trade Centre that thinking big did not necessarily mean making huge profits. It also meant that one's losses could be big.

He had also said Bumiputera businessmen must recognise and overcome their weaknesses, an obvious one being their lack

of management skills and efficiency.

Puan Maznah Abdul Hamid, who runs a major security company, said she agreed with Dr Mahathir.

She said one must, however, set one's goal and work hard to achieve it.

"It is important to know who you are, what you are good at, and what your weaknesses are.

## Training

"You should start from scratch so that you will know the intricacies of the business. You must also be an expert in the field you have chosen so that once you have reached the top, you will be able to stay there."

Puan Zuraidah Suradi, who runs a food business, said starting small meant that one would not take big risks.

"It means that we can absorb the losses that we may incur along the way."

She felt that in order for small entrepreneurs to succeed, they should be given training.

She said most training programmes were full-time and, therefore, not practical for small entrepreneurs who could not afford to take time off to attend.

Meanwhile, Maureen L. Hemphill, a Member of Legislative Assembly in Manitoba, Canada, who is attending the symposium, said many successful entrepreneurs, including women, "have taken hundreds of small steps" to reach the top.

She also said training in business was important, without which a business could go bankrupt.

Senator Dr Nordin Selat of Public Bank Berhad, when contacted, said some of the world's richest industrialists started small — a few, having begun their trade as scrap dealers.

He cited as an example Aristotle Onassis who built his empire from scratch.

Dr Nordin said it was important to have good business knowledge and know the type of business one was doing in order to succeed.