

# Part of the purpose of setting up council defeated, says Dr Mahathir

# NECC proposals are not binding

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — The Government is not bound to accept all recommendations of the National Economic Consultative Council (NECC) since it could not achieve a consensus, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.**

"We are almost back to square one where the Government has to formulate and devise the economic policy after 1990 by itself," he said at the Harvard Club of Malaysia dinner.

Dr Mahathir said part of the purpose of setting up the NECC had been defeated when the DAP and the Chinese educationists opted out recently.

"They criticised the Government-formulated New Economic policy (NEP) but their opting out means they have no formula which can draw less or no criticism from the public."

He said these people were only good at criticising and were incapa-

ble of anything positive or constructive.

"While they condemn the Government for purportedly not listening to their views, it is obvious that they are not prepared to listen to the views of others."

Much less, he said, they were unwilling to adjust their demands in recognition of the rights of others to make their own demands.

"They seem to claim that they

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□ DR MAHATHIR ON NEED FOR ETHICAL MANAGERS: P 13

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have a monopoly of wisdom. By opting out, they feel they can be free to criticise and condemn whatever that the NECC decides and, of course, whatever the Government will eventually formulate.

"They regard their own narrow communal political objectives as more important than national interest."

Dr Mahathir admitted that the NEP, being a major exercise in social engineering, had not been perfect but added that it had not failed as many pundits had predicted.

"The pundits cannot be blamed if they predicted recession for Malaysia (as a result of the implementation of the NEP).

"We know now that the greatest social engineering project — socialism and communism — were even then failing."

Dr Mahathir said that despite many sins committed in the name of the NEP by Bumiputeras and non-Bumiputeras alike, the Malaysian economy neither stagnated nor regressed the way the socialist and communist countries did.

Instead, he said, the overall economic growth accelerated with the implementation of the NEP. The growth in the 70s was seven to eight per cent, and in the 80s, after a short period of recession, caused not by the NEP but by the worldwide recession, the economy recovered and went on to record eight per cent growth.

"Today, Malaysia is placed fifth among developing economies. Only four out of more than 130 countries throughout the developing world are ahead of us."

He said any replacement to the NEP would not be based merely on the eradication of poverty and the re-distribution of wealth, but on responsible and ethical management of wealth by Bumiputeras and non-Bumiputeras alike.