

# TOWARDS EXCELLENCE

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By P.P. Lau

**KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that Malaysia must develop a work culture that can produce quality goods and services.**

The Prime Minister said attitude played an important part in moulding this culture and it depended on our values.

"If we appreciate trust, responsibility, diligence and other noble values and practise them, then we have what it takes to be successful," he said at the 1990 Quality Awards presentation ceremony at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Dr Mahathir said quality was an important objective in this day and age.

"The domestic market can be protected but there is no way we can avoid competition in the world market."

He said Malaysia had the competitive edge because of low labour cost, but added that it was not enough.

Dr Mahathir said the pursuit of excellence was a long-term goal because standards were constantly upgraded.

However, he said it was not an impossible task if everyone — both in the public and private sectors — worked at it.

Dr Mahathir said that goods and services must meet the needs of the customer. That was why *The Customer Is Always Right* must be our slogan, he said.

He said this concept must also be redefined to include fellow workers.

He said the word "customer" had always been taken to mean someone who benefited from a product.

"However, a worker down an assembly-line is also a customer of the worker before him.

"The (first) worker must ensure that his work is of quality so that his colleague would not have to deal with defective products," he said.

Dr Mahathir urged the Work Excellence Culture Movement Supreme Council, set up in July, to come up with dynamic ways to improve quality.

"We should give priority to whatever we do, be it in service, management or manufacturing. We need company-wide and nationwide quality control," he said.

Later, Dr Mahathir told reporters that more workers would be given the chance to undergo training at character-building centres to instil in them an excellent work culture.

He said the Finance Ministry had been asked to provide a special allocation for building more such centres.

The quality award for the public sector was won by the Johor State Economic Development Corporation, the private sector award by Syarikat Intel Technology Sdn Bhd and the social sector award by the Selangor and Federal Territory Association for the Mentally Handicapped (*See page 4*).