

NECC report to be made public, says Dr Mahathir

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By ROBERT GOH

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — The National Economic Consultative Council's report on proposals for an economic policy to replace the National Economic Policy will be made public, the Prime Minister said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was speaking with reporters after chairing an Umno supreme council meeting here.

The Prime Minister earlier received the 600-page report from NECC chairman Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie at a brief ceremony at the Putra World Trade Centre. The NECC spent

two years drawing up and finalising the report.

The ceremony marked the dissolution of the NECC.

The Government would give the report "appropriate weightage", reflecting the consensus achieved by the majority of its members, said Dr Mahathir at the ceremony.

However, not all the recommendations could be accepted because some NECC members had withdrawn earlier.

The Prime Minister said he regarded them as "cowards" who left so they could criticise the report later.

"They do not believe in

consensus. They can only criticise and decry what was done by the Government. They themselves could not convince the remaining members of their views.

"Social engineering programmes such as those of the communists and socialists have all failed and been dropped. But the NEP lasted 20 years although not all its objectives were achieved," he said.

"The NEP, which was formulated without any experience to count on, has succeeded in helping people of all races and led to the growth of the national economy.

"With the experience gained, Malaysia is confident of coming up with another successful economic policy to replace the NEP."

Tan Sri Ghazali, speaking at a Press conference, expressed satisfaction the report reflected the consensus of over 83 per cent of the NECC members.

(Twenty-six of the 150 members had withdrawn.)

The discussions had been held in secret, he said. The report was now the property of the Government.

"Dr Mahathir has said he would like the report to be made public as soon as possible," Tan Sri Ghazali added.