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Mahathir-Target

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 28; (Bernama) -- The newly-formed Malaysian Business Council has set a 30-year target to turn Malaysia into a developed country Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said today.

At its inaugural meeting today, the Prime Minister tabled a working paper titled +Malaysia - The Way Forward+ which outlines his views on how the target could be achieved.

+We will like Malaysia to become a developed country by the year 2020,+ he told a press conference at the end of the meeting. The council was launched by the Prime Minister earlier today.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir noted that the target might appear +ambitious+ but, he pointed out that this was what Malaysia would want to achieve and +not just the Newly Industrialised Country+ status.

He said the paper outlined important areas that needed to be focussed, rates of growth that needed to be achieved and cooperation between the private and public sector. -- more

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Responding to a question, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the paper emphasised the Malaysian concept of a developed country and the possible challenges.

He felt that the country should not just be developed economically but also spiritually and psychologically with strong ethical values.

Various challenges identified included the need to establish a united Malaysia with a shared destiny. He also stressed the need for more bumiputera participation in the economy.

The paper would be made available to the press by the council secretariat tomorrow.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is chairman of the council, said its members were not bound by its conclusions. The council served more as a dialogue platform for them to air their views. -- more

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He added that views found suitable would be incorporated into government policies, including the drafting of the new economic policy.

Similarly, the private sector should adopt any of the council's conclusions which would boost economic growth, he said.

The Prime Minister also stressed that subjects discussed at the council were not secret and its members could speak freely to the media about what was discussed.

He said the future generation, who are now in school, should be told of the national objectives so that they could adjust to the right values.

Two other papers were tabled at the meeting. They were on the effects of the Gulf crisis and on the government's privatisation programme.

The paper on the Gulf crisis emphasised its effects on Malaysia's economy and how to adjust to and balance its possible adverse effects. -- Bernama

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