

Target: A developed nation by the year 2020

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants Malaysia to be a developed country by the year 2020.

The Prime Minister set this target date when he presented a paper at the inaugural Malaysian Business Council meeting here today. The paper was unanimously adopted by the council members.

"We want to move forward. It is a very ambitious plan but we do not just want to

be an NIC (Newly-Industrialised Country) although we will have to pass through that stage first," Dr Mahathir told reporters after the council meeting.

He outlined the "important areas," including the rates and areas of growth the public and private sectors had to achieve.

He said Malaysia would not follow the definition of a developed country as set by other countries like the United States or Britain but would evolve its own identity as a developed country.

"We will first have to find out what is

our Malaysian concept of a developed country, a Malaysian mode.

"We should be developed not only in the economic sense but also politically, socially, spiritually and psychologically.

"And it is hoped, by the year 2020, we will be a united nation," he added.

His policy paper, *The Way Forward Malaysia*, will be released to the press by the Institute of Strategic and International Studies tomorrow.

Dr Mahathir said the paper would not contradict the New Economic Policy or the next economic policy because each

concentrated on different areas.

"The NEP concentrates on the political and economy aspects, the balanced development between the races and the eradication of poverty," he said.

"The policy paper, on the other hand, concentrates on the development of Malaysia and the way forward."

Asked how the paper could be translated into government policy, he said there was no commitment from the Government as yet.

"We want to listen to the views of the

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It's a forum for the people to give their views, says PM

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members first.

"Where we think we can implement, accept or incorporate into our government policy, we will do so," he said.

He said the private sector should also adopt any of the council's conclusions which would boost economic growth.

He said any conclusion to be made by the council would not just affect the business people but also the younger generation who were still in school. "They, too, should be told about the objectives."

Dr Mahathir said coun-

cil members were encouraged to pass on information to others as papers discussed were public documents: "Members are allowed to speak freely to the press and we want to have the widest publicity possible."

Asked whether the council had any say on the NEP, he replied: "No say. They just express their views."

But if they were relevant, the Government would incorporate them, he said.

Dr Mahathir said what the Government wanted was to have a forum

where people could bring up ideas and views on what should be done and to guide each other.

"But we do not want people to air their personal grouses on what the Government should do for them. We want to look at the economy and the management of the economy generally," he said.

The council also discussed two papers on the impact of the Gulf war and privatisation.

On the war, Dr Mahathir said members discussed how it would affect the nation and how Malaysia should react

economically.

Asked how often the council would meet, Dr Mahathir said no fixed date had been set but it had been suggested three times a year.

But it could also meet at any other time if there was a need, he said.

He said all members were expected to be present at the meetings which would all be chaired by him.

However, sub-committees might be formed to handle specific matters, and members could meet in small groups at other times, he added.