

PM: LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO MEET 2020 TARGET

By M. Veera Pandiyan

MALACCA, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the country's multiracial population is its "strength" to meet the target of becoming a developed nation by the year 2020.

He said although some people regarded the multi-ethnic composition as a "problem," it was actually a blessing because there was so much that could be learnt from each other.

The Prime Minister said the time had come for all races in the country to concentrate on their similarities and dissipate their differences.

"Each of the communities has its own strength,

if we can forge this into a united force. Malaysia can achieve developed nation status faster and do better than other mono-ethnic countries," he said when launching the National Youth Master Plan at the Kubu Stadium here.

Dr Mahathir said when Malaysia met its target of being a developed country, there would be enough prosperity to be shared by all.

"There would no longer be any need for the races to scramble for a share of the economic cake," he said.

The Prime Minister said even if a country is homogenous, there was no guarantee that it would be peaceful and progressive.

He said there were many examples of mono-ethnic countries which re-

mained backward and dis-united.

"It does not only take racial differences for a country to be torn by strife. Even if there is only one race in a country, it can be divided because of class struggle, ideological differences and leadership struggles," he added.

Dr Mahathir said there was no reason why Malaysia could not achieve its "Vision 2020" target if the people had the confidence to do it and worked hard.

He said although 30 years was a long time in a person's life, it was a short period in a nation's history.

"We have seen how a country which was once backward had become a world power within 30 years.

"What can be done by others, can be done by us too as long as we have the confidence in our ability.

"They are no better than us. The colour of our skin or our climatic conditions should not be regarded as obstacles."

Dr Mahathir said the problem was Malaysians had the tendency to be easily influenced by trifling matters which took up a lot of time but did not bring much benefits.

He said the time wasted in such matters could be better used for the development of the country.

Dr Mahathir said the people were a country's most important assets.

"A country with abundant natural resources would not necessarily do well if its people are not diligent.

"But a country which is not rich in natural resources can succeed if its people are hardworking and resourceful," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the "Vision 2020" target was meant for the youth of today because they would inherit the country in 30 years.

He said the youth should play their role in the implementation of the programme to ensure its success.

Youth and Sports Minister Senator Annuar Musa said the plan would directly assist in the implementation of youth activities in a more efficient manner and develop the youth as a group capable of promoting the progress achieved by the country through the wisdom of its successive leaders.