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Mahathir-MATRADE

MALAYSIA MUST MAKE A NAME AS QUALITY PRODUCER, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, June 11, Jun (Bernama) -- Malaysia must make a name for itself as a producer of quality products, capable of competing with goods from other countries in the international market, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said the future strategy of product development should be directed at giving the country's goods a comparative edge based on technology, quality and diversity of products.

Product development should no longer be based solely on available resources and a relatively low labour cost, he said when launching the Malaysian External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) at the Kuala Lumpur Hilton Hotel here.

"This will ensure that we always stay ahead of competition and, consequently, lead in making inroads into international markets through the competitiveness and quality of our goods," he added.

Such a strategy had been successfully implemented by a number of East Asian countries in developing their export-based industries, he said. -- more

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Mahathir-MATRADE 2 Kuala Lumpur

The launching ceremony was attended by International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, MATRADE chairman Tunku Tan Sri Ahmad Yahya and its board of directors.

Dr Mahathir said: "Under the Second Overall Perspective Plan, exports from the manufacturing sector is expected to grow at 16 per cent a year and its contribution to the country's total exports to increase from 60.4 per cent in 1990 to 81.8 per cent by the year 2000."

He said the country also needed to enhance its expertise in the services sector because it commanded high export potential.

"There are some Malaysian firms exporting services but there is a thinking that a strategy needs to be drawn up and a more comprehensive programme prepared for the export of services," he added.

MATRADE was charged with the responsibility to organise programmes that could enhance the performance of service export by Malaysian companies, he said. -- more

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Dr Mahathir said another matter that required the attention of everyone involved in international trade was utilisation of national facilities.

The country lost thousands of million ringgit each year because Malaysian traders made use of the expertise, organisation and facilities of third countries, he said.

He added: "Because of this, not only our physical infrastructural facilities development do not get priority but various fields of business like transportation, packaging, container operations, insurance and related activities at the ports are unable to expand."

"The government is aware of the common excuse given that our ports and their operations inefficient compared to foreign ports. But, all these can be remedied."

Dr Mahathir said performance at Port Klang had improved after its privatisation and the government was expanding the port and others too.

The Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) system would be implemented at the port which had been declared a duty-free port by the government to make it an entrepot port, he added. -- more

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Mahathir-MATRADE 4 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Urging Malaysian traders to make greater use of Port Klang, Dr Mahathir said the entrepot trade there would create much trading opportunities and make the port an important one in the region.

He hoped MATRADE could step up efforts to provide the trade information required by the business community pertaining to markets, import requirements, trading opportunities and trade intelligence.

He said: "The formation of MATRADE is a government measure to strengthen performance of Malaysian exports, be they goods or services."

Malaysia could be proud of its trade links with most countries and it was listed among the major trading countries in the world in terms of exports and imports, he added.

"This is proof that our market is open to other countries. In fact, Malaysia is among the few countries where goods from all corners of the globe is sold freely," he said. -- Bernama

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