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Mahathir-Workers

(EMBARGO: For release after 10pm)

MAHATHIR WARNS WORKERS OF PHONY SYMPATHY OF FOREIGN TRADE UNIONS  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug. 6 (Bernama) -- Malaysian workers should not be influenced by the sweet talk of foreign trade unions as they only show false sympathy, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

Motivated by self interest in ~~all~~ their actions, they were unconcerned about workers in Malaysia, he added.

"Believe me, the government elected by Malaysians has more sympathy for workers of this country than foreign workers and trade unions. Their sympathy is false," he said when addressing a Solidarity Dinner held in conjunction with Workers Day 1993.

The dinner, the highlight of Workers Day celebrations organised by the Government, was attended by senior government officials, employers and trade union leaders to reflect solidarity among them.

Dr Mahathir said foreign trade unions would surely empathise with Malaysia's aspiration to become a developed nation, able to compete with and surpass them. -- more

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"Sympathy and brotherhood of workers and trade unions from developed countries are insincere and merely aimed at destroying the economies of developing countries which have succeeded in entering the industrial field such as Malaysia," he added.

Dr Mahathir said foreign trade unions did not care for the fate of the poor workers in the least developed countries which did not produce goods which could compete with theirs.

The fate of workers in the least developed countries was very poor compared with that of workers in Malaysia but no sympathy or brotherhood was shown to them by foreign trade unions, he added.

He said: "We hope that workers and trade unions in Malaysia will not be hoodwinked by the sympathy and workers brotherhood from trade unions of the developed countries.

"If their advice and assistance were to be accepted then the development of our country will be affected and job opportunities and employment security would be jeopardised." -- more

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This, in the end, would result in Malaysia sliding back into poverty while the people in the developed countries would continue to be rich and enjoy a life of luxury, he added.

Dr Mahathir said: "Actually, there is no way of getting rich quickly, be they workers or entrepreneurs."

Strikes and industrial action might succeed in rapid increase in remuneration but they would adversely affect investment and national development and create unemployment, he added.

Countries such as Malaysia which could not afford the dole system or payment of unemployment benefits would face severe unemployment pressure which would ultimately cause industries to close down, he said.

"On the other hand, the safe and more guaranteed method of increasing remuneration was to ensure the success of the enterprise where we work," he added. -- more

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The Prime Minister also said workers should realise that remuneration should not increase by leaps and bounds at a fast rate as this would cause investors to turn to other countries.

He said ensuring industrial harmony and high productivity would be more effective in efforts to get better remuneration than through industrial action.

Increase in remuneration through such a method would not cause inflation and higher income would mean increase in real purchasing power, he added.

Quoting the "World Competitiveness Report 1993", Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was the fourth most competitive nation among industrialising countries and this was an achievement in which all Malaysians could take just pride.

To ensure that Malaysia's competitive edge remained at a high level, he said Malaysian workers could not simply imitate the methods in the developed countries where there was frequent pressure for high remuneration as this could push up production costs and make Malaysia uncompetitive. -- more

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Dr Mahathir said: "The failure of industries in the West is due to high production costs, causing their products to lose their competitive edge vis-a-vis Asian products, including those from developing countries such as Malaysia."

However, this did not mean that remuneration should not be increased at all, he added.

Income of workers should increase but through greater productivity, he said.

"Higher productivity can be achieved by increasing efficiency, by working harder, being ready to learn new production methods, having high work ethics and a disciplined work environment and through other methods which do not involve additional costs," he said. -- Bernama

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