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(EMBARGO: For use after 11 pm today, Aug 16)

Mahathir-standard

ACCEPT CHALLENGE TO MEET INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS, SAYS DR M

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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 16 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight called on local manufacturers to regard conditions for attaining international standards as a challenge to be overcome to show they can compete with the best of international producers.

For this purpose, he said, the time had come for the local manufacturers to accept the international standards as the national standards.

Such steps had to be taken to ensure that buyers in the international market were given the guarantee that every product bearing the "Made in Malaysia" label was of high quality, he said at a dinner held in conjunction with the Malaysian Invention and Design Society Exhibition, here.

Once the label had been accepted as a guarantee of quality, half of the marketing problems would have been overcome, he said.

He said that in this connection a high cost in the initial stage to ensure Malaysian goods were of high standard was appropriate and profitable.

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The prime minister suggested that those who attempted to manufacture and export sub-standard goods be prohibited from doing so and be penalised for undermining the credibility of Malaysia's other products.

At the same time, inventors and designers should always accept stringent tests for their creations because what was required was the world's acceptance of Malaysian goods as quality and conforming with description, he said.

"Maybe Sirim (the Standards and Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia), which has all along determined the quality of local goods, will undertake research and improve set standards," he said.

On the vision to make Malaysia a developed nation by the year 2020, Dr Mahathir said transfer of technology alone was not enough because the people should know how to benefit from it, and more importantly, to use the technology for new applications or innovations and improvement.

"Eventually, we will be able to invent technology and original designs. When we reach that stage, we will have become a truly developed country," he said. -- more

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Dr Mahathir said however that before that stage was reached, Malaysian manufacturers should undertake product research and development (R&D) in accordance with domestic and overseas market demand as the effort would be more profitable.

This should be undertaken to ensure that the product or technology developed fulfilled the needs of consumers, he said, stressing the importance of ways to commercialise inventions resulting from R&D so that it would not be a mere academic exercise.

The prime minister also touched on the weakness of Malaysians in the design of industrial products which he said was evident from their inability to design products that could be related to the Malaysian identity.

While stressing on the importance of efficiency in making proto-types to draw the attention and gain the confidence of investors, he said, adequate expenditure on good proto-types was not wastage.

"Such measures are necessary not only for the international market but also for the domestic market because Malaysians are a society which has been subjected to high awareness and much exposure," he said. -- more

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Dr Mahathir said that owing to this, manufacturers could no longer regard Malaysians as second class consumers compared to international consumers, based on their demand for quality goods and services.

"Actually, Malaysian society is more critical because it still regards overseas products as better than local products," he said.

Touching on the inventions of individuals, the prime minister said he hoped that they would take the initiative to understand the laws which protected their creations and be wary lest irresponsible people haul profits from these.

He said they should also be willing to share the income from their inventions because without commercialisation efficiency and manufacturing technology, their inventions would not bring benefit. -- Bernama

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