

Dr M: We must be willing to adopt

Be ready for

Sun 7 - 5 SEP 1993

**By Ahmad A. Talib
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SHAH ALAM, Sat. — **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said the people, especially farmers, fishermen and breeders, must be prepared to accept changes if they are to achieve further progress.

"Whether we like them or not, changes happen. Nothing is static. The choice is ours whether we want to benefit from the change or not," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the fact that the country has done well since independence was partly due to the changes that took place over the years.

He said: "We have been successful in many fields. Some countries which have gained independence from their colonial masters have not been successful.

"We are not yet a developed country, even though we are moving towards that by the year 2020. Our vision then is our guide," Dr Mahathir said at the National Farmers, Fishermen and Breeders Day 1993 held at the Agricultural Park here.

The Prime Minister said everyone, including farmers, fishermen and breeders, must strive to promote a culture of excellence in their work.

For this to happen, they must be prepared to move away from old practices and use new methods which had been well-researched and accepted.

Dr Mahathir said celebrations such as the National Farmers, Fishermen and Breeders Day which he was officiating should be seen not only as a day of recognition but also for these people to renew that commitment to their responsibilities.

"In efforts to develop the country, we must be willing to face challenges. We must be willing to change the way

we do things with a more modern and effective method.

"For us, changes in the early stage were done by adapting methods others had been using. At a later stage when we are successful, we may look at the possibility of creating our own technology," he said.

He told the gathering of farmers, fishermen and breeders from all over the country that it was a fact that their numbers were declining at a time when the demand for food was increasing.

Dr Mahathir said this happened everywhere. Citing the United States as an example, he said that initially, 95 per cent of its population was made up of farmers.

But today the situation had reversed with farmers making up five per cent of the population, producing food for the rest of the country.

Children of farmers, fishermen and breeders would not want to continue their parents' trade because many of them had acquired education, some excelling academically, he added.

"Surely, we expect them to work in the fields in which they have been trained," he said.

Furthermore, the Prime Minister said, farmers could not use the old planting methods because by the end of this century, the country's population was expected to reach 20 million.

This was why the Government encouraged commercial farming, he added.

"Food production will continue but by a lower number of farmers, fishermen and breeders. This can be done if they change their approach by instilling good management, skilled training and better technology," he added.

In trying to realise these

objectives, he said there was a need to understand and share responsibilities. He added that the country's vision would not be realised if everyone strayed from their duties and responsibilities.

He said: "We need to renew our commitment to help realise our targets. We

need to plan and try.

"Everybody has a role to play. You cannot say one profession is more important than the other. All professions are equally important.

"By dividing our work, we become more efficient. Everyone has a duty, and it

must be done well. If we work well, everything, God willing, will be well.

"We must remember that progress, stability and peace are the result of our own effort. We also realise that there is no benefit if there is conflict among us," he said.

change

new ways of doing things