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Mahathir-leadership

(Embargo: For use after 10pm today, May 22)

MALAYSIA WILL REMAIN UNITED AND PROGRESSIVE UNDER RIGHT LEADERS

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KUALA LUMPUR, MAY 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is confident that Malaysia, with its multi-racial population, will remain united and progressive with the right leadership.

He said Malaysia's future leaders in the 21st century faced manifold challenges of maintaining the country's economic prosperity and keeping its multi-racial population closely united.

The task of keeping the nation united was the greatest challenge of this generation and was particularly tough, given the different ethnic, religious and cultural groups, Dr Mahathir said when opening the two-day World Leadership Conference, here, tonight.

"It will be no less a challenge for future generations of Malaysians. We should therefore look at conditions in Bosnia, Rwanda, the former USSR and others to realise the consequences of tribal, ethnic and religious conflicts," he said.

He also said the country could not afford to be complacent and lose its international competitiveness that had led the World Economic Forum to rank it as the fourth most competitive nation in the world. -- more

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"Malaysia is a lucky country but our success did not come through luck alone. Malaysia is a success today because of the courage and wisdom of our past leaders who were prepared to embrace change and motivate our people to accept change," he said.

"However, now that we are on the threshold of the 21st century, we need to do more. We must look to the future with confidence and commitment."

He described the conference organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (Asli) as very timely as the 21st century would be the Asian century and an age of Asian leadership as the continent emerged as the primary driver of the global economic growth.

He said he hoped that while Western experts studied the remarkable growth and progress of East Asia, they would not try to impose Western norms and standards.

"As young nations evolving our own systems of values and practices, we need to maintain our rapid progress. We should always be ready to learn from others but the choices should be ours to make," he stressed. -- more

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Dr Mahathir said continued peace and stability were vital in East Asia to protect the gains the region had achieved, without which there could be no long-term economic growth.

He said it was a big challenge for leaders to motivate their followers with a vision that could provide strategic direction and help them change their attitudes and behaviour.

Companies and countries alike must therefore renew themselves through carefully-planned leadership development and succession planning, he said and urged Malaysian entrepreneurs and chief executive officers to plan for orderly succession to achieve successful organisational renewal.

Dr Mahathir said that another key dimension of leadership that needed to be sufficiently addressed was business or management ethics.

He also said that Malaysian companies must strive to be more innovative and creative as the two aspects were key success factors for 21st century management. -- more

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Dr Mahathir told the gathering that education and human resource development would remain the cornerstone of Malaysia's plans and strategies in the years to come and the country wanted to develop into a regional centre of excellence for education.

He said Malaysia welcomed the participation of foreign universities and training providers to come not only to train its 19 million population but also to use Malaysia as the base for Southeast Asia. -- Bernama

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