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Mahathir-Diplomats

THREE CRITERIA FOR AN EFFECTIVE DIPLOMAT, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

GENTING HIGHLANDS, Aug. 8 (Bernama) -- Datuk Dr Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today underscored the importance of mastering the English Language as one of the three criteria for Malaysian diplomats to improve their effectiveness when dealing with international affairs.

The other criteria were improvement of their knowledge on the country's political and economic issues and the importance of public-private sector co-operation.

Opening the heads of mission conference at the Awana Golf Resort here, the Prime Minister said diplomats should improve their knowledge in these matters as it would make them better spokespersons for the country.

Stressing the the importance of the English Language, he said diplomats, as representatives of the country in a foreign land, would be able to engage in "intelligent conversation" if they could master the language.

English, as the international language, was important for diplomats particularly when it came to drafting treaties and agreements, he added. -- more

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"In order to negotiate treaties, command of English must be perfect and precise," he added.

About 100 Malaysian diplomats are attending the week-long conference.

Dr Mahathir said English was also vital for them to establish contacts with the various people they deal with.

He urged them to make a real effort to learn and speak the language to the level of perfection "so that you will be able to understand what is being talked to you".

The prime minister said heads of missions who are accredited to countries where English is not the medium of communication, such as Arab countries, should also learn the languages of the countries.

He said it was necessary that diplomats take the initiative "as Malaysia is at present playing an important role in the international arena".

Dr Mahathir said they also need to have a good knowledge of the country's political and economic issues as Malaysia's track record in both the fields should be made known to the rest of the world. -- more

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Repeat, replacing earlier item
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"This is important to create a good image about Malaysia," Dr Mahathir said.

On public-private sector co-operation, he said the diplomats should be well versed with the concept of Malaysia Incorporated (Malaysia Inc.), which emphasized closer relationship between the public and private sector.

They must understand the concept to realise that without the private sector, the government would not be able to finance its infrastructure programmes and pay the salaries of its nearly 850,000 staff.

Dr Mahathir also advised them to assist Malaysian businessmen by informing them of the business opportunities available in the country to which they were posted.

Later, speaking to reporters, Dr Mahathir said his advice to the heads of mission was to make them further improve their performance in line with Malaysia's active role in the international arena. -- more

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In his speech, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said changes in the international political and economic arena held certain implications on Malaysia's political and economic policies.

The country's pro-active and pragmatic policies were not only respected by the international community but had also succeeded in bringing rapid development to Malaysia as well as enhancing its image and status in the eyes of the world.

He added, however, that the policies needed to be attuned to the world political and economic changes to enable the country to wrest the opportunities to achieve greater success.

"For that, our officers must have a high level of sensitivity, keen and critical views as well as the capability to take dynamic action while holding firmly to the principle of giving priority to the nation," he said.

He added that the important changes taking place in the country and around the world meant that Malaysian missions abroad would face greater challenges.

Also present were Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Dr Abdullah Fadzil Che Wan and the Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid. -- Bernama

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