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Japan-Look East

JAPANESE ENVOY PROPOSES CHANGES TO LOOK-EAST POLICY

KUALA LUMPUR, May 18 (Bernama) -- Japanese Ambassador to Malaysia Issei Nomura tonight proposed a four-point adjustment plan to the 15-year-old Look East Policy initiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Topping the list is the setting up of a consortium of Japanese universities here to conduct first and second year courses before trainees go to Japan.

He also proposed that the 239 Malaysian students currently pursuing post-graduate studies in Japan be absorbed into the framework of the policy.

He also suggested that industrial training courses to reflect the changing needs of the Malaysian industrial sector such as the emerging multimedia and Information Technology fields.

The diploma programme in technical colleges must be complemented with the setting up of the Japan-Malaysia Technical Institute in Pulau Pinang next year, he said when speaking at the 15th anniversary of the Look East Policy organised by Alumni Look-East Policy Society, here.

Nomura said the changes were inevitable to suit the rapid progress achieved by Malaysia over the last 15 years and also to chart the future destiny of the programme.

With the proposed adjustments, Japan hoped to make a meaningful contribution for the realisation of Malaysia's Vision 2020 to transform Malaysia into a developed nation.

Commenting on a recent press report which said that the Look East Policy had yielded poor results, he said it was not an accurate assessment of the programme as education and training was time-consuming and a life-long process.

The most senior Malaysian graduates of Japanese universities under the programme are still around mid 30s and hence, it was too hasty and impatient to draw a conclusion, he said.

The May 5 report quoted Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed as saying only 12 out of 1,200 Malaysian students sent for training to Japan under the Look East Policy had become successful businessmen, he said.

Nomura said the Japanese government spent RM25 million annually for the programme and was confident that there would be many managing directors, engineers and entrepreneurs when Look East Policy attained 30 years. --

BERNAMA

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