

29 APR 1997

Mahathir-vision

MAHATHIR: AVOID DARK HOLE IN PURSUIT OF VISION 2020

PETALING JAYA, April 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today there was a pressing need for Malaysia to ensure a correct balance between material and spiritual development in achieving Vision 2020 to make her an industrialised nation in 23 years' time.

"We must make sure that we do not fall into the dark hole that many so-called developed countries have fallen into.

"We do not want to be a wasteful consumer society where unbridled materialism runs riot," he said a key-note address at the National Congress on Vision 2020 at Bandar Sunway near here.

Adopted six years ago, the Vision 2020 had set the destination for Malaysia to become a developed nation by that year.

While stressing the need for the country to continue pursuing its economic agenda, he said for now the country must resolve to also take giant steps towards the social agenda.

He said two social strategic objectives required urgent, intensive and extensive attention.

These are ensuring a fully moral and ethical society as well as ensuring a fully-caring society and a caring culture founded on a strong and resilient family system.

The two-day high level conference is being attended by ministers, deputy ministers, senior government officials, captains of industries, diplomats, academicians and representatives of non-governmental organisations.

Urging Malaysians to always be on guard against corruption, Dr Mahathir reminded them to be wary of the so-called standards to measure corruption.

"Today, as ever, we should take not an ounce of comfort from surveys which show by so-called 'Asian standards' or developing countries standards or 'world' standards we are not too badly off; or that we are said to be no more corrupt than quite a few developed countries.

"Thank God, corruption in Malaysia is not, as it is in most countries, a way of life," said Dr Mahathir.

Looking at urbanisation, the Prime Minister said it has brought drastic changes in the way of life of many Malaysians.

"They are not all bad but invariably there is a weakening of family ties and restraints. We see an increase in drug addiction, crimes, promiscuity and high divorce rates, broken homes and abandoned babies," he said.

He said while developed nations tend to consider those social breakdowns as inevitable and to accept them, Malaysia could not do so.

"We have to try to retain our values and to fight these social evils. Even if we do not succeed completely, we should try to reduce the incidence," he said.

Emphasising the need for religion and good spiritual values, he said Malaysians must cling to good moral and ethical systems, otherwise "we will lose our sense of direction and with it, we will not achieve our vision".

"We must not politicise. We must not ethnicise. We must not finger point," he said.

Dr Mahathir said generational outrage and prejudices were not the answer to solve the problems.

"The old must not denounce the young. The young must not blame the old," he said.

He said solutions, not scapegoats, must be found through a bold but balanced response.

The Prime Minister said Vision 2020 made it perfectly clear that Malaysia must be a developed country in its own mould because modernisation did not necessarily mean Westernisation or Japanisation or Easternisation or Asianisation.

"The land that must be fully developed by 2020 must be uniquely modern, i.e. in keeping with the progress that the world has made in every field by then and yet remain uniquely Malaysians," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the meeting was not to revise the vision but to discuss how the country could progress as quickly and as productively as possible to the targets set for 2020.

"To reach 2020, if possible, before the year 2020," he said.

Dr Mahathir started his speech by stating that Vision 2020 is now a reality, studied by many countries, copied by many who also wished to move their nations, to unite their peoples behind a common destiny and to solidify their efforts behind a shared purpose.

"Countries from Botswana to El Salvador, from Colombia to Nigeria, from Mauritius to Venezuela have decided on a Vision 2020 of their own.

"The Club of Rome wants a 2020 Vision for Europe. The countries of Southeast Asia want a 2020 Vision for Asean. APEC has adopted a 2020 Vision for the Pacific," he said.

As such, Dr Mahathir said 2020, which as a measure of perfect vision, seemed to have caught on and was now the definitive time for everyone to achieve a development objective. -- BERNAMA

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