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Mape: Tune in with National Sports Policy

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ON Jan 20, 1988, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Cabinet approved the National Sports Policy which established the foundations of the Malaysian Sports System and guidelines for development.

Recognising the importance of the policy, the Malaysian Association for Physical Education, Sport Science and Fitness (Mape) organised the annual National Sports Policy Lecture since 1994 to generate public awareness and greater usage of the policy.

Major changes and development in sport must be made within the framework of the National Sports Policy, including the proposed Sport Act which we have read about in the newspapers.

Mape have three comments on the proposed Sport Act.

Firstly, Bill must be consistent with the foundations of our sport system as reflected in the National Sports Policy. Briefly these are:

Foundation 1: The sports system respect the right of the community of players and supporters - the sport associations - to make major decisions about their sport.

The system is democratic and vibrant; there is depth and breadth of decision making, leadership participation, articulation; and there is growth of the individual and strengthening of society.

Foundation 2: The system respects the right of Government to make major decisions for the benefit of sport for all.

Foundation 3: The system respects the right of the individuals to make major decisions about their sport. The system gives importance to the individual, his freedom, joy of participation and psychological and physical well being.

Foundation 4: The purposes of the system are to provide sports for - health and fitness; national unity; discipline of body and mind; recreation and play; individual development; sport education; excellence at international level; and sport facilities for mass and elite sport.

Foundation 5: The role of the main organisations in the system are:

* Sport Association: promote, develop, provide opportunities for State, national, international competitions.

* Olympic Council of Malaysia: promote the Olympic movement and to select and train athletes for competitions organised/sanctioned by the IOC.

* National Sports Council: to co-ordinate and assist high performance sport organisations.

* Ministry of Sport: to co-ordinate and assist sport for all organisations.

* Ministry of Education: to provide adequate time for physical education (PE) sport and fitness education; to provide quality PE teachers, coaches, administrators; to provide PE as an academic discipline.

* State Governments: to plan and provide for sport facilities at district and State level.

Secondly, National Sports Policy recognises the important role of volunteers. They have given much of their time, effort and money for the development of their sport through association at national, State and district levels.

In ringgit terms, our conservative estimate gives a figure of RM21 million a year of voluntary contribution to sport, including social development and nation building.

Mape believe that in no other area of our life do Malaysians give as much as they do in sport. In a very materialistic world, the concept of volunteerism is so important for the development of society.

The proposed Sport Act must recognise this and contribute positively to the strengthening and growth of volunteers at all levels.

Thirdly, National Sport Policy refers to sport as a cultural mode of expression, similar to art, music, poetry, literature. These are ways in which people express themselves.

The proposed Sports Act must recognise the individual nature of sport, where authority comes from within the individual and not imposed by outside forces.

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