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PM calls for uniform set of values

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today told Barisan Nasional component parties and State Governments to discuss and seek a uniform set of values for all Malaysians that embodied the will to reject unhealthy influences.

He said these values should be acceptable to all races and should emphasise building up one's resilience against social ills.

"We have to be committed to creating a society which has strong values and civilisation," Dr Mahathir said when briefing 1,000 BN component party members on social ills and the Multimedia Super Corridor.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Economic Adviser to the Government Tun Daim Zainuddin, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak president Datuk Leo Moggie, People's Progressive Party president Datuk M. Kayveas and Gerakan deputy president Datuk Kerk Choo Ting were present at the Putra World Trade Centre for the briefing.

Also there were BN Members of Parliament, Senators, State Assemblymen, and local councillors.

During the 2 1/2-hour briefing, Dr Mahathir said all parties should work in concert to understand the issues before proposing solutions.

He said there was a need for a uniform approach because there were too many contradictions in the solutions proposed by the various quarters.

Citing an example, Dr Mahathir said when the Government decided that the business hours for entertainment centres should be reduced, there were quarters who claimed that the move would not solve the problem.

"If actions vary from one group to another and from place to place, then we will be accused of not understanding the problem," Dr Mahathir said.

He added that it was the duty of every BN member to study and discuss the problems affecting the youths before considering and proposing solutions.

Dr Mahathir said they should adopt wise, effective and rational measures to check social problems which were rapidly becoming serious.

"As BN members, we should realise that we are from the Government party and our influence is much bigger than that of other parties and hence we should fully understand this problem.

"Whether we are members of the Government or not, we still can play a role as leaders but the important thing is that the BN should adopt a common stand," he said.

Dr Mahathir said BN leaders, especially those in the States, should not make hasty decisions when dealing with the problem.

"If we make decisions and realise that they cannot solve the problem, then we will be at a loss," he said.

Dr Mahathir said although dadah abuse was more serious than alcohol consumption, there were those who believed that dadah was not mentioned in the Quran.

"In fact, dadah causes more problems than alcohol.

"It is also one of the causes of the spread of AIDS," he said.

To a question from the floor, Dr Mahathir said BN leaders should also get the views of academicians and also their co-operation in undertaking studies on social problems so that effective remedial action could be taken.

The Prime Minister wanted the BN leaders and members to realise that the

social problems arose not merely because of foreign influence but also due to weaknesses in Malaysian society, the authorities and the Government.

Dr Mahathir reminded BN leaders not to take advantage of the existing social problems and advance their own political interests.

To a suggestion that the Government should co-ordinate and stress on Islamic and other religious education to fight social ills, the Prime Minister said all religions only taught good things.

However, he said, problems arose when there were people who made inaccurate religious interpretations to the extent of politicising religion and blamed others for the social problems.

Dr Mahathir said religious education served as a strong wall of defence against undesirable influences and was more effective than man-made laws.

However, the Prime Minister said it would be meaningless if religious education only stressed on questions of worship and did not stress on social ills and other unhealthy activities.

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