

06 JUN 1998

Agong-Speech

I AM SATISFIED WITH GOVT'S EFFORTS TO REVIVE ECONOMY- KING

KUALA LUMPUR, June 6 (Bernama) -- The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar today expressed satisfaction with the efforts of the government of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to overcome the country's economic problems.

He also urged the people to support such efforts as without their backing the government would not be successful in reviving the economy.

"I feel proud over the government's attitude of not losing hope in its efforts to develop the country," he said at the investiture at Istana Negara in conjunction with his official birthday today.

"I realize that it will take time for the economy to recover," said the King who was saddened that the economic downturn affecting the region had not only stalled development but had also resulted in people losing their jobs and the industrial sector and businesses making losses.

The King wanted the government to continue paying attention to the welfare of workers who had been made jobless by providing them with skills training so that the productive ones could work elsewhere.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong was grateful that despite the economic downturn the government was continuing to provide help to the needy in the social and health fields and also undertaking low and medium cost housing and education projects.

His Majesty noted that the government had provided several aid programmes for entrepreneurs such as franchise business for Bumiputeras and they should take advantage of this help to expand their small and medium scale industries.

"These industries are important to create more medium class entrepreneurs and help local industries instead of they depending on supplies from foreign sources," he said.

The King said efforts to draw foreign investment and promote Malaysian products overseas should continue.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong also wanted the strong bond of racial unity which was the nation's pride, the pillar of harmony and the vital foundation for progress to be further solidified.

He also called for the preservation and nurturing of the family unit based on religious and Eastern values.

Dr Mahathir in his congratulatory message pledged loyalty to the King on behalf of the government and people of Malaysia.

Palestine Ambassador to Malaysia Ahmad Al-Farra, as the doyen of the diplomatic corps extended birthday greetings to the King.

He noted that the economic crisis affecting the region also had its impact on Malaysia.

"However, we are confident that the wise policies and practical measures adopted by Your Majesty's government, will enable Malaysia to overcome this temporary economic downturn," he said.

Conveying deep appreciation for Malaysia's hospitality, he said the Malaysian experience of the past decade, in terms of economic growth and development was one that was exemplary to other countries.

"We are confident that Malaysia will utilise its vast capabilities and sound resources to fully realise Vision 2020. This will in turn help contribute to peace, security and stability, not just in the region but in the world," he said.

He praised Malaysia for the many constructive roles the nation had

effectively played in the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement and its extensive effort in fostering Islamic solidarity and South-South Cooperation and in global peacekeeping operations.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Cabinet ministers, deputy ministers, foreign dignitaries and wives were present at the ceremony.

-- BERNAMA

MNY AAM