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Mahathir-Governance

PM WARNS OF MARKET FORCES' ATTEMPTS TO IMPOSE GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

BANGI, Sept 8 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today warned developing nations of the attempts by market forces to impose a system of governance and economic management which will enable them to maximise their profits without restriction and regardless of the cost to other segments of society.

"Their stress is on minimal government role in the management of the economy, meaning finance and business activities. But governments must regulate and restrict other activities," the Prime Minister said when opening the general assembly of the Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management (CAPAM), here.

He said the market forces were now a claimant in the field of governance.

"Unabashedly market forces now claim a right to discipline governments even," he said.

Dr Mahathir said in a world that is more and more preoccupied with economic wealth to the exclusion of political and social well-being, "market forces have laid claims to a dominant role in governance".

"Not unnaturally the concern of market forces is with the maximisation of profits for themselves at the expense of everything else," the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir said that apart from market forces, various bodies, almost all self-appointed like the non-governmental organisations (NGO), now claimed a right to have a role in the governance of a country.

"Going by the negative title of Non-Government Organisations, these bodies have become so established that at many international conferences they provide alternative fora for debate and resolution on whatever issues focused upon by the official conference," he said.

He said although there were serious NGOs which aimed at highlighting issues ignored by governments, many were protest or anti-establishment movements with a tendency to take the law into their own hands.

"The world professes to believe in democracy or the voice of the majority. But NGOs are the antithesis of democracy, for they represent the minority or even the individual who seek to impose their views on the people and the government of the majority," he said.

He said the NGOs and market forces were now a part of a country's governance and the administrative machinery must adjust to them.

"The question is can present-day governments adjust to this new environment, to less government and more public self-administration?" he said.

He said society must be regulated by a regulatory institution possessing the required authority.

"To ensure that the authority is not misused, checks and balances must be put in place," he said.

However, the prime minister said, when other forces such as the NGOs and the market forces were also admitted into the process of governance, "and these act almost entirely in their own narrow interests and according to their own preceptions, then society will be threatened even more with anarchy and injustice."

"Certainly, when the so-called 'market forces' decided to discipline the governments of the East Asian countries by impoverishing them and their millions of people, the cause of justice, of human rights is not served,"

Dr Mahathir said.

He said that if developing countries were to survive at all and be given the fundamental right to develop and aspire to attain developed status, new rules and codes of conduct for all participants (countries) must be formulated and duly enforced.

"The law of the jungle does not fit into the framework of good governance," Dr Mahathir added.

-- BERNAMA

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