

07/11/1998

PM: We're ready to amend policies to ensure private sector succeeds

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Government is willing to review policies to accommodate the needs of the business community so that they will become successful.

He said if policies were found to be a hindrance to the country's development, the Government would study ways to amend them.

"We have changed many laws and policies before to ensure businesses in Malaysia succeeded," he said at a dialogue with participants of a conference on microchip design at the Putra World Trade Centre.

The conference, titled "Accelerating the Establishment of CAD and IC (Microchip) Design Industry in Malaysia", was jointly organised by Malaysia Industry-Government Group for High Technology, Multimedia Development Corporation, Malaysian Technology Development Corporation and Amica Technologies.

Dr Mahathir later witnessed the signing of memoranda of understanding between Amica Technologies and three local universities and Mara Institute of Technology.

The Prime Minister said the Government was keen to help promote the microchip design industry as it was its duty to help the private sector.

"If you have problems, please communicate them to us ... that is to the highest level," he said, assuring the participants that he would give his personal attention to solving them.

Dr Mahathir explained that in Malaysia, there existed a very close co-operation between the Government and the private sector as the idea of both parties working together closely was considered good.

He said this was because the Government regarded itself as a partner of the private sector, thus it did not wish to see the latter fail. As proof of the close relationship, Dr Mahathir said dialogues with the business sector were held every year.

Alluding to accusations of the Government bailing out companies hit by the economic problems, Dr Mahathir said: "We are not bailing them out alone. We are actually bailing ourselves out because if they earn profits, we will also make money."

On the microchip design industry, Dr Mahathir said building the infrastructure was within Malaysia's capability but it was more difficult to train Malaysians to participate in it.

"We want them to be able to actually do the work (designing), not just study the theories at universities," he said.

Dr Mahathir added that Malaysia might be the third largest producer of microchips in the world but from the value-added aspect, it gained nothing much as much of the technology was imported.

"The volume of trade may be big but what we actually get is minimal. What we want to do is to import only the basic components so that the finished products exported have a large local content. Eventually, we want to produce the whole thing here."

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