

05/08/1999

Farmers, fishermen need to modernise

THE policies for the development of agriculture and fishery are already in place but are not adequate due to the bias in favour of the industrial sector, a corporate figure said.

Datuk Hassan Harun, chairman of KUB Malaysia Bhd and a member of the Second National Economic Consultative Council (NECC 2), said the involvement of farmers and fishermen had been small and they should now modernise in line with the needs of the new millennium.

He was commenting on the call by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for the agriculture and fishery sectors to employ a new development approach such as introducing large-scale estate management methods in vegetable and fruit production and adopting new fishing techniques.

Dr Mahathir had said the agriculture sector was previously not given much attention as the country focused on developing the manufacturing industry. Attention was given mainly to the development of rubber, oil palm and cocoa estates.

Hassan said as the country increased its efficiency, it should not forget the basic needs of the people.

He also said food production must be approached by new technology.

Hassan considered the Prime Minister's speech as touching on a wide aspect of things and serving as a guideline with regard to issues and challenges to be taken into consideration when drafting plans for the new millennium.

On the importance of tourism in the next millennium, president of Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents Tunku Iskandar Tunku Abdullah said tourism had been proven in many economies to be a commercial undertaking that can bring in foreign exchange very rapidly.

Tunku Iskandar, who is also a member of NECC 2, felt that the emphasis now should be on promoting further inbound and domestic tourism as this area had received tremendous support in the last couple of years.

"The last one year has seen a huge upsurge in domestic tourism. Our own people are travelling within (the country).

"This may be due to Saturday being a day off and the higher cost of overseas travel, coupled with the good development of local tourism resorts and infrastructure."

He added that Malaysians were taking advantage of these factors and the current emphasis was to market domestic tourism strongly overseas.

Strong emphasis should also be given to meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) as participants of such events spend two to three times more than leisure travellers.

However, the first thing to do now was to turn around the tourism industry which was on a decline, he said.

(END)