

27 SEP 1999

Might-Innovation

GO FOR HIGH-KNOWLEDGE CONTENT INDUSTRY FOR GROWTH

SUBANG JAYA, Sept 27 (Bernama) -- Malaysia needs to redirect its economy from one of low-knowledge content, low-capital, and labour intensive to capital-intensive and high-knowledge content industry to move into the next phase of economic growth.

Joint Chairman of Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (Might) Tan Sri Dr Omar Abdul Rahman said today that this was important as Malaysia was aspiring to become a developed country by 2020.

In this context, he said it was a matter of urgency that the National Science and Technology Policy be reviewed. It has not been reviewed for the past 16 years.

"The review is also important in the context of the national economic recovery plan and the intensification of knowledge in the economy to harmonise it with the various government policies and plans," he said in his address at the "Might Consultation 1999" themed 'Towards the Development of a National Innovation System', here.

The two-day consultation, organised jointly by Might and the Academy of Sciences Malaysia, is to discuss the concept and implementation of the national innovation system in the context of the role of education, training, technology transfer and the role of research and development (R&D) funding.

Dr Omar said the review must also take into consideration changes in ideas and technologies to suit current developments.

He said in this era of knowledge-driven economy, the role of science, engineering and technology at the national level must be clearly defined in the policy.

He said over the years, Malaysia had already put in place various systems to encourage knowledge-based economy through the intensification of R&D.

"But this is not good enough for Malaysia to be competitive in the globalised world," he said.

Dr Omar said knowledge-based economy would bring major structural changes such as the development and emergence of new industries, electronic commerce, changes in the pattern of employment and governance.

The creation of such an economy would also need the policy intervention by the government and the active cooperation of the private sector.

Addressing the same dialogue, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman said the ability to innovate, develop products quickly and provide services for customers at a competitive price was an increasingly critical sector for the success of Malaysian firms.

She said because of this, many firms had implemented specific processes designed to improve their innovative capability.

Taking this into consideration, she said in today's knowledge-based economy, the government gave emphasis on innovation by encouraging and supporting more R&D efforts.

"At the same time the attitude of the people towards this innovation system is also important," she said.

Dr Siti Zaharah said Malaysia was fortunate that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had a very forward looking approach in developing an innovation system for the country.

Inputs from the consultation will be used to prepare the Eighth

Malaysia Plan and the Outline Perspective Plan 4.
-- BERNAMA
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