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Abdullah-Leadership

MALAYSIANS APPRECIATE RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP

KUALA LUMPUR, April 13 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today that Malaysians by and large are pragmatic and peace-loving people who appreciate responsible leadership and who can distinguish between short-term popular leaders and those with a proven track record.

He said responsible leadership was not about shouting empty slogans or to lead one's supporters up the garden path.

"Responsible leadership calls for statesmanship, courage and wisdom and for doing the right thing and not just the popular things," he said when launching the interactive multimedia CD-ROM "Mahathir: CEO Malaysia Inc", here.

Abdullah said it was his fervent belief that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who had been Malaysia's leading catalyst for change, would lead the country towards a new and better future.

He said over the past 18 years, Dr Mahathir had transformed Malaysia socially, economically, physically and politically.

"I am confident that Dr Mahathir can continue to help us manage the next phase of our national reforms as we enter the new millennium," he said.

Abdullah said cries for change and reform and greater democracy and human rights were being heard today.

He said that while some things needed to change, a lot more needed to be preserved as they had stood the test of time.

"Change for change sake is not what our people want. Change and reforms with a clear agenda and a clear vision will help us manage the transition into a modern 21st century country able to cope with the challenges of the new millennium," he said.

Abdullah said while neighbouring countries suffered untold sufferings and dissatisfaction arising from the economic turmoil, Malaysia proved to be more stable politically and economically that many Malaysians tended to take for granted the peace, stability and prosperity enjoyed for so long.

He said it was in fact a test of leadership to be able to maintain the harmony achieved for so many years and the progress made in all fields.

Abdullah said governance in a multi-racial and multi-religious society was never easy, more so during difficult times.

"We need to ensure that we do not destroy the social fabric of our society and the solid foundation that has been so painstakingly laid by our leaders from all communities.

"In fact, it is a major challenge that we leaders of today face that we bequeath to our successors an equally peaceful, stable yet progressive, dynamic Malaysian nation," he said.

Abdullah said after more than eight years of phenomenal growth, no one in his worst nightmare would have imagined the present predicament the country was faced with.

He said more than any other person, Dr Mahathir was determined to make Malaysia rise again like the phoenix rising from the ashes as he was resolved to put the economy back on its feet.

Since appointed as Prime Minister in 1981, Abdullah said, Dr Mahathir had transformed Malaysia from a commodity-based lesser known nation into a respected industrialising nation.

He said before the currency crisis hit Asia two years ago, Dr Mahathir

had built up Malaysia's average yearly income from US\$300 a person to US\$5,000 -- a legacy few leaders could match.

Abdullah said in place of the old conservative caution, Dr Mahathir had concocted a stew of belief that blended the realism of hard economics, the acumen of a shrewd businessman and enough giddy futurism to either excite or frighten his followers.

"To my mind, he is many things and everything.... Dr Mahathir is truly a modern day business renaissance man. As the conceptualiser of Vision 2020 and the Multimedia Super Corridor, he can be aptly described as Bapa Wawasan," he said.

The CD-ROM is a frank, unique and comprehensive account of Dr Mahathir's leadership of Malaysia and it discusses the country's rise and success stories through a strategic leadership focus on the Prime Minister. The CD-ROM includes over 35 speeches from the Prime Minister, testimonials and views from political fans, the rakyat and captains of industries.

It also has a one-hour exclusive interview with Dr Mahathir digitised in VCD format where he speaks about the aspiration of Bangsa Malaysia, leadership in the new century, Malaysia's political scene and the national economic recovery plan, among others.

The Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (Asli), the producer of the CD-ROM, contributed 50 of the CD-ROMs to the Foreign Ministry and the Education Ministry. The made-in-Malaysia product retails for RM60.

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