

16/08/1999

New measures for the new millennium

MALAYSIA'S vision to become a developed nation by the year 2020 should not be dampened by the current economic downturn.

Although the two-year economic crisis may have set back our goal by a few years, the important thing is to implement the right measures and make up for lost time.

The newly launched National Economic Consultative Council 2 (NECC 2) has precisely that task ahead of it.

The NECC 2 would make recommendations for a new policy to replace the National Development Policy (NDP), and this will steer national development beyond the year 2000.

As Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says, the council's 155 members must spur a paradigm shift, allowing society to venture into new areas which would widen its capabilities.

We must attempt to venture into the unknown. Research and development must be stepped up to achieve technological breakthroughs. Only then can we be leaders in our own field. This is vital if we want to create a niche as the world moves towards globalisation and liberalisation of trade.

It is also important to examine and learn from our mistakes and shortcomings, especially from the implementation of the current NDP.

Wastage and misallocation of resources must be eliminated, or at least minimised.

The goal of Vision 2020 is a challenge for all Malaysians, irrespective of race, religion, educational background or political affiliation. It is, therefore, regrettable that several opposition parties rejected the invitation to join the NECC 2. They should have instead welcomed the opportunity to present their views and proposals.

The nation's development is, after all, not the sole prerogative of the government or any one political party. It is the responsibility of every citizen. National interests should take precedence over vested interests.

(END)