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BUMIPUTERA CONGRESS

THREE MAIN THRUSTS IDENTIFIED TO PREPARE BUMIS FOR NEW MILLENNIUM

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 11 (Bernama) -- The focus on "K-Economy" (knowledge economy), restructuring government institutions and agencies and the assimilation of an appropriate culture have been identified as the three main thrusts for bumiputeras to prepare themselves for the new millennium, said entrepreneur development minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed today.

These three issues are very important for bumiputeras at this juncture in order to equip themselves for the new millennium when compared with the establishment of bumiputera institutions like Bank Bumiputra Malaysia Bhd and Institiut Teknologi Mara in the previous congresses, which catered for their needs in the past, he said after the end of the two-day 4th bumiputera economic congress here.

The congress was organised by the entrepreneur development ministry and Dewan Perniagaan Melayu Malaysia (DPMM).

Mustapa said, "What is important is that we speak about globalisation. The new requirements are that bumiputeras must prepare themselves and today we find that much attention is being given to the K-economy and knowledge education and these, I guess, were the main issues (that were raised at the congress)."

Meanwhile, DPMM president Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli said the restructuring of government agencies and institutions did not mean eliminating or closing those which did not function effectively but were aimed at restructuring their overall functions, focus and delivery process in accordance with current needs.

Asked about a proposal adopted at the congress calling for the merger of education ministry with the human resources ministry, Tajudin said that one of the many resolutions.

The proposal is to emphasise the need to provide emphasis on life-long education, he explained.

He said most people in Malaysia received formal training or education for only one third of their lives.

Tajudin said the life span of women in Malaysia is 73 years while that for men is 71 years but most of them finished the formal learning process when they finished their tertiary education at between 23 and 25 years old.

After that, there has not been any follow-up education, he said.

But in a K-economy and knowledge society, he said the advancement of knowledge has to be throughout one's life span.

"In view of this, we proposed that there should be a follow-up through the restructuring of certain government institutions," said Tajudin.

Mustapa said the issue of adopting a positive culture which was emphasised by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday that there is no short cut to success ought to be taken note by bumiputeras to ensure that they moved forward.

Based on observations by his ministry and DPMM, he said this year's congress was highly successful in terms of participation, commitment and level of debate, which reflected the earnestness of the participants.

Mustapa believed that following the effects of the recession, bumiputeras want to have a little government assurance that their interests would be taken care of.

"I feel they were pleased with the assurances from the prime minister and (first finance minister) Tun Daim Zainuddin that the government would assist them wherever possible to ensure that bumiputeras would achieve

success that we can be proud of," he said. -- BERNAMA
MK SHY