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Unions-Mahathir

WORKERS UNIONS BACK MAHATHIR'S CALL TO FORGE CLOSE COOPERATION

KUALA LUMPUR, May 22 (Bernama) -- Cuepacs and the Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC), the two largest and strongest workers unions in the country, rallied behind Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at a solidarity rally here today and pledged to cooperate with the government in reviving the economy.

The two organisations, with a total membership of over 1.5 million members, also pledged their support to the steps taken by the government to put the economy back on track.

They agreed with Dr Mahathir's call to workers to forge close cooperation with employers and the government.

The pledges by Cuepacs and MTUC came hours after Dr Mahathir addressed the rally held in conjunction with Workers' Day 1999 at the Putra Stadium in Bukit Jalil, here.

While the 800,000-strong member Cuepacs president N.Siva Subramaniam said Dr Mahathir's message to the workers at the rally was "loud and clear", MTUC president Zainal Rampak described the prime minister's speech as very encouraging.

Dr Mahathir had said that close cooperation between workers, employers and the government was most vital to resist the attacks of the new capitalists who are attempting to dominate the world.

The prime minister said that the new capitalists claimed to be disciplining weak governments by determining who should rule besides dictating policies that should be followed, for their own benefit.

"We should together strive to defend our country...this is most essential. When faced with problems, we should join forces...the government, workers and employers, to defend our rights," Dr Mahathir said.

Siva Subramaniam said: "Actually, this call is one endorsed by the workers, employers and the government".

He said that the support and cooperation of government employees for the government was strong and solid.

Speaking to reporters after attending the rally, Siva Subramaniam said Cuepacs had instructed its members to give their undivided support and loyalty to the government.

Siva Subramaniam, who is also the National Union of Teaching Profession secretary-general, said teachers would also give their support and loyalty to the government and their profession.

"Don't use students for your own gains just because you do not agree with the government," he said.

He said any problems should be settled within the "existing channels" and not through illegal means.

Zainal meanwhile said the MTUC, in welcoming Dr Mahathir's call for workers to unite with employers and government to overcome the economic problems, would extend its support and cooperation to the government to ensure a win-win situation for all three parties.

At the rally, Human Resources Minister Datuk Lim Ah Lek, who is also the chairman of the National Labour Advisory Council (NLAC), said the council agreed that workers and employers nationwide should continue to give their staunch support to the government under Dr Mahathir.

He said they agreed to support the government in initiating the various measures to revitalise the nation's economy.

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