

NECC2 proposals crucial to future of country, says PM

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PUTRAJAYA, Thurs: The Second National Economic Consultative Council (NECC2), headed by Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid, presented its proposals for development policies in the 2001-2010 period to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

The proposals outlined policies for human resource development, bumiputra improvement, social development, poverty eradication, science and technology development and Islamic finance and banking development, among others.

The report was prepared by representatives from

among politicians, businessmen, labour organisations and non-governmental organisations during the past one year.

Mahathir, who described the report as crucial to the future of Malaysia, promised that the Prime Minister's Department would carefully study and implement the appropriate proposals.

He said that since it contains the views and wishes of many different parties, it will not be wholly satisfactory to everybody.

"I'm sorry. We cannot satisfy everyone. I am sure that some NECC members will not be happy with what other

groups in the country have got," he said.

"But if you look closely, even those people are sacrificing something for you. Everybody has to sacrifice something."

Mahathir, who said sacrifice is necessary for national unity, cited Umno's initial participation in Sabah politics as an example of sacrifice. He said it contested only half the seats in the state government because it does not intend to "grab power for ourselves".

"We want to distribute power. We can run this government as a Malay government ... we have the majority. But that is not our intention."

He also said Malaysia has managed to confound critics who, after the 1969 riots, predicted that the main races would not be able to live together in harmony.

"Even now, they keep saying it. The foreign media write reports that even though Malaysia looks good on the top, on the bottom it is crumbling.

"They always start their sentences with 'even though'. If you show them a white paper, they will say 'even though it looks white, it is actually black'.

"We Malaysians know that it is not black underneath. We will maintain the whiteness of our country."