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Mahathir-Malaysians

CALL TO MALAYSIANS ABROAD TO LOOK HOME AND HELP ECONOMY, PEOPLE

By: Tham Choy Lin

HONG KONG, Oct 28 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has called on Malaysians abroad to look home and see how they can contribute towards its economic growth and wealth of the people.

He said they can also do the country a good deed by dispelling untruths reported of the country so that more people would come to invest or visit Malaysia.

"We hope that Malaysians abroad will always look at Malaysia, look at their home country and think about what they can do to contribute towards the growth of our economy and wealth of our people," he said at a luncheon hosted in his honour by the Malaysian Association here, which has 15,000 members.

Dr Mahathir arrived today for an overnight working visit to speak at the Asia Society gala dinner.

His remarks came a day after the government announced several incentives to lure home skilled Malaysians.

The measures include permanent residence for spouses and children within six months and tax exemptions on income and personal assets brought home.

Dr Mahathir said the incentives were given because Malaysia was growing so fast and needed more manpower, pointing out that it was one of the few developing countries in the world which already had two million foreign workers.

"This is the result of our job-creating policies but now, we are switching to a knowledge-based economy and we need knowledge workers. We need to have your interest to invest in Malaysia," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the foreign spouses of Malaysians would be welcomed and he hoped that they too would contribute towards the rapid economic growth.

To a question from the floor on what Malaysians, especially in Hong Kong, could do to help, Dr Mahathir said they could give their expert views and plant ideas that can benefit Malaysia either through interaction with Malaysians at home or any Malaysian groups or chamber of commerce.

"One of the things that you have is, of course, your knowledge of this very important commercial centre in the world, Hong Kong, and that knowledge can be usefully employed in Malaysia," he said.

"But good words from you about Malaysia would be very good indeed. I don't see how we are ever going to get a good press so we would rely on 15,000 Malaysians in Hong Kong to pass the word around that Malaysia is a great country and all those nasty things they say about us are not true at all," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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