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Mahathir-Formula

MAINTAIN TESTED FORMULA FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS AND UNITY, SAYS DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 31 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged the people to discard all demands that are racial in nature and to defend the formula for unity which was worked out by the country's founders so that Vision 2020 can be realised.

"At the start of this new year, century and millennium, let us all set aside demands which could not possibly be accepted by the multi-racial society; let's return to moderation and tolerance which have brought peace and prosperity to us and our country," the Prime Minister said.

If the people continued to adhere to the formula which was worked out half a century ago, Vision 2020 would become a reality, he said in his New Year message which was aired over RTM tonight.

He said there was no need for Malaysia to set a new policy or formula to ensure the country's stability, peace and progress.

It was clear that the formula worked out by the country's founders -- Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, Tun Tan Siew Sin and Tun V.T. Sambanthan -- and which was adopted and adapted by Sarawak and Sabah leaders, had proven very effective for Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said.

He said leaders who held the reins after the nation's founding fathers merely had to give meaning and effect to the Malaysian formula which had been worked out and agreed to when the country fought for independence.

"In view of the success of this formula, do we want to abandon it and set a new formula on the demands of any quarter which claims the formula which we have been practising for 43 years is unfair and favours a certain race only?"

"Are we willing to jeopardise our country's stability and progress and maybe destroy our future because certain quarters wish to get all that they demand for?"

Dr Mahathir said the formula that was adopted was effective and could be used with minimal sacrifice by the people, and "although there are minor defects, they are no more than those found in any other country in the world".

He said when Malaysia gained independence many had predicted that it was unlikely to see stability and progress because the various races were divided and there was disparity in the level of development of their places of living and activities.

However, the world had come to admit that Malaysia could be a peaceful and fast developing country as evident today, he said.

"The various races in Malaysia can live in peace because their leaders who fought for independence and formulated the country's founding policies were moderate people who wished to see all races being accorded appropriate places in this lucky country.

"They were not extreme and were very considerate, and resisted pressure from extremists within their own races and chose to treat the rights of all races fairly," Dr Mahathir said.

He said the May 13 riots in 1969 broke out because not all the people understood the wisdom of the country's founders.

That experience prompted the leaders at that time to formulate more effective policies to give meaning to the understanding reached by the country's founders, he said.

He said the "give and take" concept of cooperation established by the country's founding fathers was so effective that many within and outside the country tried to copy the formula.

"But the imitation we see in the country does not have the same sincerity and intention. Like the comedians say, they sleep on the same pillow but have different dreams. The original practitioners of the concept

of inter-racial cooperation have a common ambition, that is to be fair to all. People who desire stability and prosperity for the country can surely differentiate between a piece of glass and gem," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the situation was ideal when not a single race was satisfied with their condition because if any one race could get all that they asked for without making sacrifices, other races would surely lose out and not get their fair share.

"In a multi-racial society, if imbalance gets too bad, there will inevitably be tensions and racial riots and if riots occur, those making demands would not only fail to get what they sought but may lose what they already possessed, and all of us will then be big losers," he said.

Dr Mahathir said certain quarters tried to achieve their demands by armed rebellion and committed acts which the country had never seen before when they captured, tortured and murdered people whose religions were different from theirs.

"They have forgotten that the Malayan communist terrorists tried for 43 years (1948-1990) to topple the Malaysian government but failed. Do they believe that with their small group they can succeed? Are they confident that the people will support their violence?" Dr Mahathir said.

On the contrary, the majority of Malaysians irrespective of race and religion were moderate people who wanted peace so that they could live comfortably and go about their work and business without disruptions, he said.

The Prime Minister said in a democracy the people were the judge and they themselves would feel the effect and outcome of their decisions.

"As the judge, the people must be calm and make assessments with an open mind. Sentiments and emotions cannot be allowed to influence the considerations of a judge. Feeling angry for no reason will not possibly result in a wise decision. Mistakes in judgement will have to be borne by the judge. When the country is damaged, rehabilitating it is very difficult," he said.

Dr Mahathir also touched on the country's rapid development in its 43 years of independence which had placed it on the world map, including the development of Kuala Lumpur and the towns, transport system, the world's tallest buildings the Petronas Twin Towers, infrastructure and the successful hosting of the KL Commonwealth Games.

He said Malaysia's shift to an economy based on manufacturing industries had spurred economic growths and boosted per capita income from US\$300 at the time of independence to almost US\$4,000 now.

"This per capita income is low compared to those of developed countries, but because of our low cost of living, with US\$4,000 in Malaysia we can buy goods and services equivalent to about US\$10,000 in the United States, for example," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government opted for privatisation because its revenue was not enough to speed up development and it would be unwise to borrow, especially from overseas.

"Because we did not borrow, the depreciation of our ringgit during the downturn did not exert too much pressure on us. On the other hand, privatisation has enabled us to build thousands of miles of highways, water treatment plants, power generation plants and other facilities with greater speed and to manage them more effectively with bigger profits," he said.

The prime minister said from only one university, the country now has 14 government universities and dozens of private institutions of higher learning.

Dr Mahathir said although foreigners had predicted that the Malaysian economy would crumble because Malaysia did not follow the dictates of world economic experts, economic growths recorded by the country after the recession far outstripped those of other countries which were attacked by rogue currency traders.

"Today Malaysian traders, entrepreneurs and developers are well-known and invited to invest in and help develop other countries. Many Malaysian

economic experts are invited to improve the economies and plan the development of countries which are impressed by the development and progress of Malaysia," he said.

Citing as an example Petronas, once listed among the top 500 companies in the world by Fortune magazine, he said the national oil corporation was now producing oil in Syria, Sudan and Vietnam and undertaking oil and gas pipeline installations even in Argentina.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had become a focus of information technology industries with its Multimedia Super Corridor project, and was on its way to becoming the centre of educational excellence as it had begun attracting students from Southeast Asia, Africa and Europe.

He said although there were groups which did not get special treatment, their progress actually exceeded the set targets because the advancement of people who are smart, hardworking and who possessed capital could not be restricted.

"As such, they continue to progress rapidly and achieve their share earlier. On the other hand, the weak group continue to lag far behind and have yet to meet the target set for them, although this target is lower than their percentage," he said.

He said the New Economic Policy had reduced the gap to a certain extent and because of this the recent economic downturn did not spark racial riots as happened in several other countries.

The prime minister said the success achieved by Malaysia was not something ordinary because it was very difficult to develop a multi-racial country whose various races were at different levels of development.

"This is because development must be accompanied by attempts to balance the progress of all races so that no one would feel marginalised and left behind. These efforts need to be done without seizing the wealth of any race for distribution to the poor races. Instead, distribution should be done from an expanded economic pie," he said.

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