

Visionary policy to be tabled next week

By FOO YEE PING

PETALING JAYA: The National Visionary Policy, to be tabled in Parliament next week by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, will address issues like national unity and poverty eradication.

Members of the Second National Economic Consultative Council (NECC II) said the policy was a result of their year-long discussions for another policy to replace the former National Develop-

ment Policy.

Dr Mahathir will table the policy along with the Third Outline Perspective Plan (2001-2010), both aimed at promoting development, on Tuesday.

Council member Datuk Lee Lam Thye said the council felt strongly about enhancing integration as it was the basis for a progressive Malaysia.

Lee said the council wanted to see greater interaction among different races and ample opportunities for this to happen.

He said the council, during its deliberations last year, had paid a great deal of attention to poverty.

The council submitted its report to the Government five months ago.

In the report, the council outlined a nine-point policy which included the restructuring of society, education, finance and Islamic banking and women in development.

Bandau MP Dr Maximus Ongkili, also a member of the council, said the Government

would need to go back to the basics and ensure that the nation's wealth was properly divided.

"We must address the poverty issue more seriously. Income disparity has widened," he said.

He also said that education should be more affordable.

Dr Ongkili said the drop in commodity prices like rubber and palm oil was a signal that Malaysia should diversify into other areas like food production.