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8MP-MAHATHIR

8MP TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH WITH RESILIENCE

KUALA LUMPUR, April 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today an allocation of RM110 billion has been set aside under the Eighth Malaysia Plan (8MP), which will focus on achieving sustainable growth with resilience.

He said the three key thrusts of 8MP were to shift the growth strategy from input-driven towards knowledge-driven in order to enhance potential output growth, accelerate structural transformation within the agriculture, manufacturing and services sector and strengthen socio-economic stability through the equitable distribution of the nation's income and wealth.

In tabling the 8MP at the Dewan Rakyat here, Dr Mahathir said developing the country into a knowledge-based economy will permeate every sector and involve the rakyat at large.

He said all must and can partake in greater utilisation of knowledge.

The Prime Minister said that the knowledge content on all economic activities, be it in agriculture, manufacturing or government will have to be increased so as to strengthen value added and generate employment.

The economic sector will be allocated the largest allocation amounting to RM50.5 billion or 45.9 percent of the total allocation.

Out of this amount, RM7.9 billion or 7.1 percent will be for the agriculture subsector, RM10.3 billion (9.4 percent) for the commerce and industry subsector and RM22 billion (20 percent) for the transport and communications subsector.

Dr Mahathir said the social sector will be allocated RM37.5 billion (34.1 percent), of which more than half will be for education and training.

The security sector will be allocated RM10.8 billion (9.8 percent) while the general administration sector will be allocated RM11.2 billion (10.2 percent).

The Prime Minister said the government has allocated RM13.2 billion for the rural development programme, of which the major portion will be channeled to land development, human resource enhancement and the implementation of various physical and social infrastructure works including rural roads, electricity and water supply.

He said the thrust of rural development programmes will focus on transforming rural areas to be more conducive to investments as well as attractive countryside living, enjoying the full range of basic and quality infrastructure and social services.

Dr Mahathir said the thrust of infrastructure development over the next five years will be to upgrade existing facilities and increase capacities, particularly in the less developed areas as well as to improve productivity and efficiency in urban areas.

Out of the amount allocated for infrastructure development, 78.6 percent has been set aside for the transport subsector.

A sum of RM4.9 billion out of this allocation will be used to build new roads to open corridors for growth as well as increase accessibility to rural areas.

An additional sum of RM9.1 billion will be expended to improve and upgrade existing roads for greater safety, driving comfort and reduce travel time.

Dr Mahathir said that to ease traffic congestion in major urban centres, an integrated, efficient and reliable public transport as well as intelligent transport systems will be implemented.

He said the capacity and efficiency of rail services will be improved with the electrified double-tracking project from Rawang to Ipoh, which will be extended to Padang Besar in the north and from Seremban to Johor Baharu in the south.

Port and airport capacities will also be increased and their efficiency improved to meet rising demand, he said.

The Prime Minister said that RM4 billion will be allocated for interstate water transfer, new and upgraded treatment plants, reduction of water loss and waster projects.

He said efforts will be undertaken to improve and expand sewerage services for better quality effluent and environmental protection, involving an allocation of RM1.6 billion.

Dr Mahathir said that the development allocation for education and training will be used to increase accessibility and improve quality, especially to fulfil the requirement of a knowledge-based economy.

He said the capacity of science and technology-related education and training programmes will be expanded, while additional facilities provided and existing ones improved.

At the tertiary level, new universities, polytechnics as well as skill training institutes will be built.

In the case of health services, Dr Mahathir said the emphasis will be on expanding and intensifying the scope and coverage of promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative services.

Housing and other social services will continue to be given priority with the aim of improving the quality of life and contributing towards the formation of a caring society, he added.

The Prime Minister said priority will continue to be given to the development of low-cost and low-medium-cost houses while the development of low-cost housing will be expedited to ensure that those who are eligible will be provided houses either for rent or sale. -- BERNAMA

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