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Mahathir-Tax

DR MAHATHIR PROPOSES SETTING UP AGENCY TO COLLECT TAX

By: Jamaluddin Muhammad

TOKYO, June 7 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today proposed the setting up of international agencies to collect tax from rich traders in a move to help poor countries.

He said the agencies should be entrusted to collect taxes and distribute them to poor countries which needed them for infrastructure building.

"Traders who make money from the world should pay back to the world," he said during a dialogue session after Dr Mahathir delivered an inaugural speech on "Globalisation, Global Community and the United Nations" at the U Thant Distinguished Lecture Series at the United Nations University, here.

To a question from the floor, he said people with the capacity to trade all over the world and make money from the world should pay back something to the world.

The money, he said, could be used to help the poor countries.

Dr Mahathir said although it was mandatory for all countries to contribute 0.7 per cent of their Gross Domestic Product to help poor countries not many had done so.

He added that there should be a law that applied to everybody and the rich (traders) who made a lot of money from the global market should pay taxes to help poor countries who have been marginalised from the rest of the world.

The Prime Minister said at the moment some poor countries have not been included in World Trade Organisation meetings.

"They have the right to benefit from the world too," he said.

Those who attended the lecture and dialogue included diplomats, politicians, scholars and journalists.

Answering a question on whether East Asian countries were prepared to form military cooperation among themselves in order to protect their interest, Dr Mahathir said he did not believe in military cooperation at all and military should be disarmed.

"The world spends too much money on arms and wastes a lot of money on arms race. Arms have no financial return,"

"Problems should not be solved through military ways. It is still primitive. We have not progressed very far since the first caveman bludgeoned his rival and grabbed his wife," he said.

Dr Mahathir said research on arms should be regulated as not to encourage arms race.

The Prime Minister also added that Malaysia would continue with its Look East Policy as it had benefited the country in the area of education and inculcated a good work ethics.

"We will continue to look east not only to learn right things but also the wrong things," he said.

On Malaysia's practice of good governance, Dr Mahathir replied that the key principle was to protect the interest of the majority of the people while recognising the human right and freedom of the minority.

"Good governance means looking at the right of everyone including the minority as long as it does not deprive the right of majority," he said.

-- BERNAMA

JM DVS