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Mahathir-ICT

DR MAHATHIR CONCERNED OVER LOW USAGE OF ICT BY SMES

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 4 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister today expressed concern over the low level of utilisation of information and communication technology (ICT) by Malaysian companies especially the small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad reminded them that they risked being sidelined because they were not able to connect electronically to the global supply chain network.

Opening the CEO Summit 2001 here, he said if nothing was done to rectify the situation, it would mean losing out to players from more advanced countries and literally disappearing from the business world.

"I would like to seriously urge the chief executive officers in particular those from Malaysian-owned companies to commit themselves to using more ICT in their business processes," the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir also called on CEOs of multi-national and large local corporations which had the resources to implement e-commerce to work with SMEs, the banks as well as technology, logistic and telecommunication companies and internet service providers to bring e-commerce into the main stream of business in Malaysia.

He said Malaysia's own IT agenda and strategies would mean nothing if the people themselves were not prepared to act upon them and they should now move forward towards their realisation.

The Prime Minister said there was an urgent need for SMEs, which constituted about 90 per cent of the establishments in the manufacturing sector, to quickly adopt the new electronic medium and expand their electronic operations from purely administrative and inventory keeping to actual day-to-day transactions.

Dr Mahathir said to reap the benefits offered by e-commerce, it should be viewed as a source of business opportunity and appropriate steps must be taken to exploit it.

Not acting on this opportunity, he said, would put Malaysian industries at a disadvantage in the global market where competitiveness was being increasingly improved by the use of ICT.

"Remember that government protection cannot be relied upon any more once markets are opened by Afta (Asean Free Trade Area) and the WTO (World Trade Organisation)," he added.

Dr Mahathir said cutting the costs of doing business, increasing speed and adding value through extensive use of ICT as well as improving the supply chain were logical and necessary steps for companies wishing to stay competitive and survive.

At a dialogue session later, the Prime Minister said there was no need for CEOs belonging to the older generation to fear new technologies which were crucial to advance their businesses.

Dr Mahathir said it was important to convince the top men to embrace ICT to enable them to inculcate the new culture in their respective organisations.

The one-day event, themed "Action for Knowledgeable and Sustainable Industries" was jointly organised by the International Trade and Industry Ministry, MyBiz Malaysia Sdn Bhd and Industrial Business Machines (IBM).

-- BERNAMA

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