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MAHATHIR-BUDGET

DR M: GOOD DEMAND FOR MALAYSIAN MADE PRODUCTS

PUTRAJAYA, July 10 (Bernama) -- There is a great demand by other countries for Malaysian made products which are considered to be of good quality, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"This sentiment has been expressed by the leaders of these countries where they specifically request that Malaysia supplies the said goods," he said when opening the Budget Dialogue 2002 with some 50 government and non government bodies here today.

The countries seeking to import Malaysian products include the Gulf nations and other developing nations that are able import, and who have had in the past imported their products from Europe, he said.

Local investments in the manufacturing sector should be also increased to balance up the decreasing amount of foreign direct investment (FDIs) into the country of late, he said.

Mahathir, who is also the Finance Minister, said that Malaysia had the potential to manufacture specific products for export.

This is because Malaysian industrialists have the expertise in the manufacturing of products such as home appliance, fabrication, furniture and other products that can be exported to non-traditional trade partners.

On the country's economy, he said that amidst an export market scene that did not look too good, economic growth should be further encouraged by domestic economic activities.

Although the country's economic expansion is moved by fiscal stimulus, all parties should come forward to play their respective roles to activate the growth, he said.

He said that while the private sector investment has increased, its rate and level of growth was yet to be satisfactory and still below the pre-crisis level.

Therefore, the private sector needs to put in more efforts to realise its real growth potential, he said.

"The private sector's catalyst role in generating the country's economic growth is important in view of the fact that we cannot always depend on the government to stimulate economic activities," he said.

He said that the decreasing FDIs were also due to the fact that most of the investments were now being channelled to China and this again reflected the need for more efforts toward local investments. -- BERNAMA

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