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MAHATHIR-GLOBALISATION

MAHATHIR: OBVIOUS WINNERS AND VERY OBVIOUS LOSERS FROM GLOBALISATION

KUALA LUMPUR, June 27 (Bernama) -- Globalisation has tremendous potentials that benefit both developed and developing countries but in the process, there are obviously winners and very obviously losers.

With losers and winners found in both developed and developing nations, Dr Mahathir said it was no accident that 58 percent of the Americans say that they are opposed to globalisation.

The Prime Minister said because of the differing social welfare safety nets and different levels of poverty and wealth, the immediate adverse effect of globalisation in the rich countries is the loss of jobs.

But to the impoverished countries, the consequence is "the termination of the practice of eating...at least for a while," he said in an address at the 10th World Economic Development Congress here today.

Dr Mahathir also questioned the so-called "gains from trade" as propagated by the theologians of globalisation, whereas there are also "the pains of trade".

"Why don't they tell us about the trading by a few currency traders which earn them billions at the expense of millions losing their jobs, their subsidised rice and fuel, and at times their lives?," he asked.

"How do these many (people) gain from trade?"

He also pointed out that in the last Asian financial crisis, Malaysia lost US\$250 billion while, in contrast, the currency traders made only US\$5 billion.

"It has been a tough time for us to get out from the situation created by the currency traders," he added.

Reiterating that he does not totally oppose globalisation, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was one of the countries to adopt it, when it attracted foreign direct investment through incentives offered right after Malaysia became independent.

What Malaysia does not favour is the unfair competition brought about in the globalisation process, where the big foreign corporations could gobble up the small companies in the developing countries.

"One of the central truths about our times is that the second great age of colonialism is already upon us.

"For Malaysia, I say that 450 years of colonialism is enough. Malaysia must be free. We must be free to decide our future for ourselves," he added. -- BERNAMA

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