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OPP3-Mahathir-States

OPP3 TO HASTEN DEVT OF LESS DEVELOPED STATES

KUALA LUMPUR, April 3 (Bernama) -- The thrust of the regional development policy under the Third Outline Perspective Plan (OPP3) will be to accelerate the development of less-developed states and reduce the socio-economic imbalances among regions.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in tabling the OPP3 at the Dewan Rakyat here today, said among the measures to be taken would be to promote the concentration of economic activities by state on the basis of their comparative strength.

Besides this, the industrial dispersal programme would be continued as well as further improve infrastructure and the access to quality basic amenities in the less developed states, he said.

Dr Mahathir said all the states in the country registered improvements in the quality of life arising from improvements in per capita income as well as access to better infrastructure, social services and basic amenities.

As bumiputera companies had already made inroads into the construction, transportation and agricultural sectors, there was a need for them to diversify into other high value-added activities, particularly in the manufacturing, services and distributive trade, he said.

Dr Mahathir said an enabling environment would be created, including the provision of incentives and financing, to assist Bumiputera acquisition of appropriate technology as well as management expertise.

In addition, the privatisation programme would continue to be implemented to create more opportunities for Bumiputera entrepreneurs at the corporate level.

The programmes to develop the Bumiputera Commercial and Industrial Community would focus on building more sustainable, self-reliant and world-class Bumiputera entrepreneurs capable of competing effectively both in the domestic and international business, he said.

"There is a need for Bumiputera entrepreneurs to develop positive values and the ethics of business for them to be continuously successful and self-reliant," he added.

To develop more Bumiputera entrepreneurs, he said the existing vendor and franchise development programmes would be further strengthened and expanded.

The government would also enhance Bumiputera participation in the retail trade sub-sector through the Bumiputera Retail Trade Development Project or PROSPER.

This project would be target-specific and provide assistance and support services such as providing premises and capital, identification of business opportunities as well as training in accounting and cash management.

"It is hoped that PROSPER will succeed in increasing the presence of Bumiputeras in new growth centres," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government would formulate appropriate mechanisms to increase the participation of Bumiputeras in modern sectors and ensure that the employment pattern largely reflected the ethnic composition of the population.

The capacity of the government's higher education institutions would be expanded to increase accessibility, especially to Bumiputeras, to balance the increase in private educational institutions.

"Both the public and private institutions of higher learning will be required to increase the number of Bumiputera graduates and ensure that the courses offered meet market demand," he said. -- BERNAMA

MR SHY DVS