

03 APR 2001

OPP3-FOREWORD

PM: A UNITED "BANGSA MALAYSIA" NATION HIGH ON GOVT'S PRIORITY

KUALA LUMPUR, April 3 (Bernama) -- Forging a united nation consisting of a progressive and dynamic "Bangsa Malaysia" living in harmony remains high on the government's priority list, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He also envisioned "Bangsa Malaysia" to be imbued with strong moral and ethical values.

Diligence, discipline, credibility, pride in one's work and achievements as well as the relentless pursuit towards continuous self improvement would be important values and attitudes for Malaysians to develop, he said in his foreword contained in the Third Outline Perspective Plan (OPP3) tabled at the Dewan Rakyat today.

"It is also important for Malaysian society to show political maturity by avoiding extremism or parochialism. We must never cease to remember that the vital ingredient for sustainable growth is a harmonious society," he added.

Dr Mahathir was confident that with unity and the commitment of all, Malaysia would be able to achieve its long vision of becoming a developed nation where everyone could enjoy high income and good quality of life.

A key thrust was promoting an equitable society by raising the income and quality of life of those in the low-income groups and reducing economic disparity among ethnic groups as well as between locations.

Dr Mahathir pointed out despite pursuing the strategies for the restructuring society in the past 30 years, Malaysia has still some way to go in achieving effective bumiputera participation and creating self-reliant and sustainable bumiputera entrepreneurs.

"The government can only go so far in setting the necessary conditions and enabling environment for the restructuring of society to take place.

"In the final analysis, it is the bumiputera community that will have to intensify efforts for the realisation and accomplishment of these targets," he stressed.

In facing challenges ahead, Dr Mahathir said bumiputeras must change their mindset and even the value system.

At the same time, bumiputeras should enhance their skills and entrepreneurial capabilities to participate in the knowledge-based economy and take advantage of the opportunities created within and outside the country.

The prime minister said OPP3's policies and strategies would bring the nation closer to the fulfilment of the Vision 2020 aspirations only if there was the total commitment of all Malaysians to translate them into effective actions.

As for the government, he said it would be steadfast in ensuring that the goals set for the nation were carried out with a sense of urgency, sensitivity and imagination while avoiding inconsistencies in the interpretation of policies and programme implementation at the same time.

During the OPP3 period, he said growth objectives would continue be balanced with environmental consideration to safeguard growth and prosperity for the present and future generations.

On the development of quality human resources, the prime minister said this would be pursued vigorously to provide a productive workforce and build a learning and knowledge-rich society.

The government would also seek to reduce the performance gap between

the rural and urban areas as well as among the disadvantaged groups through increased accessibility to quality education.

Dr Mahathir said the preparation of OPP3 had benefited from the deliberations of the Second National Economic Consultative Council (MAPEN II).

"Although it is not possible for the government to accept in toto the recommendations of MAPEN II, the numerous ideas proposed and thoughts expressed by the members have been taken into account in the formulation of OPP3," he added.--BERNAMA

MOT SHY