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Mahathir-8MP (Employment Restructuring)

RACIAL BALANCE IN EMPLOYMENT TO BE IMPROVED, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, April 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the government will take measures to improve the balance of Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera employment in both the public and private sectors.

He said the concentration of non-Bumiputera in the private sector and the Bumiputera in the public sector would be reduced by increasing the number of non-Bumiputera in the public sector and increasing the intake of Bumiputera in the private sector in management, supervisory positions and their businesses.

Dr Mahathir said the government would also endeavour to increase the participation of non-Bumiputera at all levels of the police, army and in the field of education.

"In this way, all the activities in the community will be reflective of the various races of Malaysia," he said when tabling the Eighth Malaysia Plan (8MP) 2001-2005 at the Dewan Rakyat, here.

He said Malaysian citizens from Sabah and Sarawak would also be encouraged to work in the peninsula to foster closer relationships among the states in Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said education and training would continue to be an important vehicle to achieve the employment restructuring objectives and in this regard, more places would be made available for qualified Bumiputera students in public and private institutions of higher learning.

At the same time, attention will also be given towards improving the performance of Bumiputera students especially in Science, Mathematics and the English language.

"Adequate financing will be provided to the Bumiputera to assist them to pay the higher fees in the private institutions," he said.

Turning to the topic of income distribution, Dr Mahathir said the government would continue to address the issue of income imbalance, particularly between and within ethnic groups, income groups, economic sectors, regions and states.

As part of a major long-term income distribution objective, the nation would create a bigger and more prosperous middle-income group in addition to increasing income of the lower income group, he said.

He also said measures would be taken to encourage smallholders and farmers, particularly those with small and uneconomical land size, to diversify into activities such as aquaculture and livestock farming as well as in non-agricultural income-generating activities.

"At the same time, the government will establish an income augmentation mechanism to protect smallholders during periods when the prices of primary commodities fall to drastically low levels in the world market," he said.

Touching on the environment, Dr Mahathir said efforts would be taken to improve air and water quality, manage solid waste and industrial waste efficiently, develop a healthy urban environment and conserve critical natural habitats and resources.

He said measures would also be taken to increase public awareness about the environment with the cooperation of non-governmental organisations, the private sector and the media.

On energy, he said there was an urgent need to moderate the energy intensity trend in order for Malaysia to remain competitive.

"Hence, efficient utilisation of energy, especially in the industrial

and commercial sectors will be encouraged," he added.
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