

Policy's objective to change mindset

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'Not a vehicle for technology transfer'

THE Look East Policy is aimed at helping to change mindsets, especially among Malays, and should not be misconstrued as a vehicle for learning technical skills or enhancing transfer of technology.

Small and Medium Industries Development Corporation of Malaysia chairman Tan Sri Muhamed Khatib Abdul Hamid, in underlining the rationale for the policy, said this was the basis on which Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad initiated the policy.

He said the Prime Minister wanted Malays to change their mindset and emulate the work ethics of the Japanese and South Koreans.

"This was why Dr Mahathir proposed the Look East Policy. It was not for transfer of technology or to learn technical skills," he told the *New Straits Times* after presenting the key-note address entitled Malaysia's Look East Policy: Challenges and Contributions yesterday. The former Malaysian ambassador to Japan said a change in mindset was necessary to develop and promote the entrepreneurial spirit among Malays.

"Entrepreneurs are self-driven, innovative, creative and resilient. How many of the LEP graduates are imbued with such a spirit?" he asked.

Khatib said the 20th anniversary

of the LEP was the right time for alumni to ask themselves if their Japanese experience had rubbed off on Malaysians.

"Has there been an impact in their workplace, families and community. This is what I want to raise in my working paper," he said.

In his paper, he said Japan was the right country for Malaysia to emulate as it had the right work ethics and corporate culture.

This was because values like hard work, loyalty and persever-

ance were Islamic in nature and to be emulated, he added.

Earlier, replying to a question from the floor on problems faced by Malaysian students in Japan, he said Malays had the skills to be great but lacked motivation and were always finding excuses for shortcomings.

"We don't like to talk about these weaknesses. If there are weaknesses, we have to identify and remedy them," he said, adding that he was not indulging in Malay-bashing.

In a lively and light-hearted hour-long presentation which saw numerous questions posed by participants, Khatib sent home the point that Malaysian students needed to understand Japanese culture.

He recalled an instance when a group of Malaysian technical students angrily protested that they were forced to cut grass and wash toilets and not allowed to even touch the machines.

"I told them that this was the Japanese way. They take time to teach students discipline before imparting knowledge.

"Then there was the case of some students saying that if you drink water with the liquor-drinking Japanese, your water was considered to be liquor. We have to understand that no Japanese meal is complete without liquor."