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Abdullah-Policies

ABDULLAH TO CONTINUE POLICIES LAID OUT BY LEADERS BEFORE HIM

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 3 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has given an assurance that he will continue the policies that have been laid out by the leaders who came before him.

He said that Vision 2020 would continue to inspire and drive the nation towards holistic development and in becoming a developed country.

Stressing that the national vision policy would continue to underpin the national economic policy, he said: "We must bring comprehensive human development in the areas of politics, ethics and morality, and socially."

"The spirit of the New Economic Policy will not be neglected, given that it ensures our efforts to restructure society will strengthen national unity and eradicate poverty," he said when tabling a motion of thanks to his predecessor, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in the Dewan Rakyat here.

His speech, themed "Inheriting Success and Building a Future of Excellence, Glory and Distinction" was his maiden official speech as Prime Minister in the august House.

The fifth Prime Minister said that the spirit of power sharing, which is the core of the nation's system of governance and nation-building efforts, would continue to be strengthened.

He said that the practice of constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy would continue to be supported by respecting the separation of powers between the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary as this was important to maintain the checks and balances needed to prevent abuses of power.

Abdullah said: "I have inherited the responsibility of governing a successful country. The responsibility is heavy and I cannot do it alone.

"Therefore, I seek the cooperation and support from all -- legislators, administrators, the private sector, political parties, the media and from Malaysian citizens from all walks of life to work with me to take Malaysia to greater heights -- to achieve excellence, glory and distinction.

"To you Allah, your humble servant turns for guidance and inspiration, strength and fortitude, patience and determination."

The Prime Minister also said that the success inherited cannot be continued if creativity and innovation do not become part of the nation's culture.

He said that First World infrastructure must go hand in hand with First World mentality.

He stressed that human resource development had to be enhanced to ensure that the growth of Malaysians balances physical, mental and spiritual aspects.

Abdullah said that in a knowledge-based economy, people was the most important factor. "Therefore, the government will work towards providing quality education for each and every Malaysian to reach their full potential."

He said that a value system that rejects crass materialism must be developed. "We must reject a mindset that places the pursuit of material gain and narrow self-interest above all else."

Abdullah said: "We must seek and identify new sources of economic growth. We must develop new approaches to enhance our competitiveness and strengthen our resilience to face global challenges."

"The distribution of economic opportunities must be equitable to benefit the broadest range of the people.

"We need to ensure that there are synergies between rural development and mainstream national economic development, and identify new sources of wealth for those in the rural sector."

The Prime Minister said that Malaysians must be ready and courageous enough to face and deal with change and must enhance research and development in the new and strategic areas of information and communications technology (ICT), biotechnology, science and modern agriculture as their capabilities in these areas were still nascent.

Abdullah said that the Bumiputera development agenda in producing a commercial and industrial community, as well as a science and technology community, must be fair and just, based on meritocracy within the community itself.

He said that this was necessary to enable Bumiputeras to receive due respect and recognition for their capabilities.

"Marginalising Bumiputeras who are truly capable and qualified, whatever the reason, will be damaging to the community in the long term," he said.

Acknowledging the private sector as the engine for economic growth, the Prime Minister said that they should play a more important and active role in creating employment and economic opportunities.

He said that this requires the private sector to develop a more efficient delivery system.

The public sector, he said, must radically move beyond its role as mere regulators and law enforcers and must become more effective, efficient and transparent facilitators, able to respond speedily to the needs and requirements of the private sector.

He said the public sector, shouldering the responsibility of ensuring that national policies were implemented effectively and transparently, reflecting a clean and incorruptible image, should be clean, efficient and trustworthy and embrace a work culture that was based on the concept of leadership by example.

People friendliness must be the order of the day in public service delivery, especially to the ordinary citizen -- those without high standing or important positions or a famous name -- and the people who were most in need of assistance. "We need to prioritise the people," he said.

The Prime Minister also said that corruption was an odious crime and more effective methods to deal with it must be explored.

He said: "In this regard, prevention is equally important as punishment. Streamlining work processes, reduction of red tape, improvements in the delivery system, a conscious effort to raise the quality of work and more frequent and effective audits would reduce the opportunities for bribery.

"Our resolve to have a civil service that is corruption-free should not be weakened by unhealthy practices in the private sector or by parties that are outside the government that contribute to this disease," he said.

He said that the governance of the nation would be strengthened if the country's laws were enforced transparently and without fear or favour.

"Crime prevention must be intensified. Vice that tears apart our moral values must be eradicated. We must fight those groups involved in the underworld and vice activities, and expose those who collaborate with them."

"The security of private property and personal safety particularly of women, children and visitors to our country must be assured," he said.

Abdullah said that Malaysia was a young nation with a young population and the country must be able to cradle the hopes and aspirations of the younger generation.

He said that the ideas, aspirations and idealism of the youth must be

harnessed into mainstream national development and draw from it innovation, invention and creativity.

He said that the family institution was important and must be reinforced by educating the young the right value system.

"We must advocate the concept of a happy family, to ensure the older members of our society are treated with deference, respect and continue to be cared for. This approach is consistent with the teachings of Islam and with the tenets of our culture," he said.

The Prime Minister said that there was a need to ensure that women, making up half of the country's population, were accorded equality and not discriminated against in the formulation of policies, in the enforcement of these policies and in levels of participation.

"We need to recognise the importance of their role," he said.

Abdullah also said that globalisation and ICT had connected the world and Malaysians cannot live in isolation.

He said that Malaysia must be committed to being an oasis for foreign investments, international trade and a place where cultures meet.

He said: "In the face of global realpolitik, the government will continue to protect the sovereignty of the nation and will not compromise on our national interest."

"We will remain steadfast and principled in pursuing global and universal justice. As the chair of the Non Aligned Movement and the Organisation of Islamic Conference, we will work towards creating an equitable world economy and a global political order based on international law," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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