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MAHATHIR-ENTREPRENEURS

CHINESE ENTREPRENEURS CAN SET EXAMPLE TO RICH, DOMINEERING CORPORATIONS

PETALING JAYA, July 28 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says Chinese entrepreneurs can show rich nations and big corporations that business is not just about world domination or getting richer at the expense of the poor, but a smart partnership that leads to wealth sharing with the local populace.

Hitting out at rich nations for trying to dominate the world through their ability to exploit and create wealth, the Prime Minister said Chinese entrepreneurs have contributed to the wealth of the country by working with and sharing wealth with the poor locals.

Unlike the rich nations and big corporations, Chinese entrepreneurs have not been too greedy, taking everything for themselves, but are willing to share with the local people, he said when asked on the contribution that Chinese entrepreneurs could make in the globalised world.

Dr Mahathir said this during a question-and-answer session at the 7th World Chinese Entrepreneurs Convention here today.

He said that Chinese entrepreneurs could also use their worldwide network to contribute to wealth creation.

As for China, Dr Mahathir said it could play a big role in ensuring stability and peace by balancing other forces in the world, besides getting prosperous and becoming a big market for the rest of the world.

At present, he said China was somewhat a threat to Southeast Asia because of its ability to attract investment with its low cost and highly skilled labour which in turn affects export products from this region.

"But we believe this is a transitional period," Dr Mahathir said, pointing out how Japan was once attractive for its low priced products before prosperity and demand for higher wages pushed up the prices of its goods.

"It is not happening in China quickly, but over time, costs in China will go up. As China gets richer, they cannot attract foreign direct investments but would need more things and become a big market," he said.

"As such, we should look at what we can sell to China. Now we are selling palm oil. When they (China) are richer, they become a good market (for palm oil)," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was not scared (of the notion) that China would become a big power and gobble everyone up because "this is not the tradition of China"

"People had come all the way from Europe to conquer us, but we are near to China and yet they did not conquer us," he said.

He said China knew for a fact that to become wealthy, one need not conquer countries but compete with each other.

As such, with its people being hardworking and intelligent, China can still become rich even without conquering or forcing people to accept the Chinese system.

Turning to investments, Dr Mahathir said China has to make adjustments and be friendly to investors because some processes involved several authorities such as the central, provincial and city governments.

He said Malaysian investors had experienced one incident whereby after getting the permit to assemble cars and having done some work, the central government did not approve the permit and the plan was aborted.

As such, he said China would have to formulate laws that encouraged investments.

He, however, added that there have been improvements with many Malaysian investments in China being profitable.

To a question on the need to trade with the United States, he said countries should diversify and never trade with just one country.

He said that since the US was a big market, Malaysia did trade with the US whereby 20 percent of Malaysian products were exported there.

However, the US has not been able to buy as much now and Malaysia is finding new markets in West Asia, Eastern Europe and other countries, he said.

Touching on the US dollar, he said countries accepted the US dollar as the world currency but it was not necessary to use the US dollar as a country could still use its own currency to trade.

He said Malaysia has long used a bilateral payment arrangement whereby no US dollar was involved. -- BERNAMA

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