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MAHATHIR-BUMIPUTERA

PM DISSATISFIED WITH BUMI ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 30 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed his dissatisfaction over the performance of bumiputeras in the economic field.

"I am not satisfied. They should have achieved (the) 30 percent (target) by the end of 1990 but today, we are still in (the range of) 18 percent," he said when asked whether he was satisfied with the performance of bumiputera entrepreneurs at a press conference at the Parliament lobby after presenting the Mid-Term Review of the Eighth Malaysia Plan at the Dewan Rakyat here today.

He said that the actual amount of bumiputera participation in the economy now was big -- about 400 times bigger compared with 1970s.

"But others (non-bumiputeras) also grew in time, and because of that, the percentage of (bumiputera) growth is not as what we wanted," he said.

This is a cause for concern, the prime minister said.

"Unless you can balance the economic performance of bumiputeras and non bumiputeras, there is always the danger of jealousy and this can be spread by some irresponsible people," he added.

When asked if the bumiputera quota system practised by the government was a backward move, Dr Mahathir said that it was not, and that without any quota from the government, bumiputera contractors would face problems.

"If there is no quota, it is possible that bumiputeras would not get anything."

Dr Mahathir who is also Finance Minister said that from his observation, bumiputera contractors were more dependent on the government for contracts.

"They are afraid to get contracts from the private sector maybe because they may not be successful," he said.

"Because of this they depend on the government, we don't like them being dependent on the government but if there are no contracts from the government, they would not get work," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that Bumiputera contractors had improved in terms of numbers but not in quality.

"People (have) asked us to give (contracts) to as many people as possible and they even told us that (we are not being fair) by not giving to everybody.

"So we gave to everybody and this included the incompetent ones and they messed everything up. Now, we have to begin all over again, to go back and make an assessment on who is the most competent," he said.

However, Dr Mahathir said, if the government wants to emphasize on quality, then the number of contracts given would be small.

"But if we give (projects) to everyone without taking into account whether they are competent or not, then we are going to end up with a lot of failures," he said. -- BERNAMA

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