

02 JUN 2003

PAKLAH-KLBC

STAY VIGILANT TO PROTECT OUR UNIQUE ACHIEVEMENTS, SAYS DPM

KUALA LUMPUR, June 2 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the RM7.3 billion economic package recently announced by Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad had been well received and will take the country past many of the current problems.

"Our GDP (gross domestic product) this year is expected to be RM383.6 billion, our per capita income over RM14,000 and, importantly, per capita income based on purchasing power parity close to US\$9,000," he said in his speech at the launching of the Kuala Lumpur Business Club (KLBC) today.

He said despite major challenges borne by international issues such as the war on terrorism, and the recent war in Iraq, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), the nation managed to grow by 4.2 percent last year, and expected to achieve 4.5 percent growth this year.

"Indeed we must fight against any moves towards extremist and intolerant policies and actions which could spell the end of Malaysia as we know it. This may include taking action against obvious targets such as movements that preach militancy.

"We must therefore always be vigilant and guard against elements that would disturb our unity, affect our peace and harmony, and impede our progress and development. We must protect our unique achievements," he said.

He urged that the business community should respond and take advantage of these conditions and measures to counter some of the stubborn short-term challenges.

"We must have honest people managing our businesses, not those out to make a quick buck or those looking to rip off the unsuspecting. Certainly, we must not have self-interested tycoons or mercenaries lurking in corporate Malaysia," he said.

He said global competition was a challenge for all Malaysians and whether it succeeded as a nation depended upon the practice of daily values of integrity, honesty and excellence.

With trade barriers progressively coming down, Abdullah said Malaysian businesses must always be able to create and sustain first class products and services that meet international standards to stand against the harsh terms of regional and international markets.

"We have to think about restructuring our economy and what that implies in the present challenging climate. We have to look, as I have said before, for new sources of growth and new sources of wealth," he stressed.

He said businessmen must venture to capture new territories and create new markets.

"I have always said that our vision is vision 2020. I have said that our path to it requires nothing less than a mindset focused on excellence - excellence in the conduct of the affairs of state as in the conduct of business, excellence in management, in delivery systems, in the maintenance of the simplest things such as drains to the most sophisticated infrastructure such as world class airports," he said.

Abdullah said the government expected KLBC, a highly interactive group, to play a constructive role to generate response and feedback on government's plans and policies as well as stimulate thought and come up with well-informed business proposals. -- BERNAMA

PK KTC

