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Mahathir-War

WESTERN GLOBALISATION CAN CAUSE WORLD WAR, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

By: Mikhail Raj Abdullah

MBABANE (Swaziland), Aug 13 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has warned that the brand of globalisation Western countries are espousing can ruin the world by causing a war that is truly global in proportion with rich ethnic minority states fighting poor ethnic majority states.

The Prime Minister said "that the world war that will come will not be between alliances of nations," but rather be waged between classes of people.

As such, developing countries should unite and reinterpret globalisation based on a "prosper-thy-neighbour concept with a win-win" formula, he said in his keynote address at the opening dinner of the Global 2003 Smart Partnership International Dialogue at Ezulwini, some 10km from here, Wednesday.

"The present interpretation of globalisation will result in greater and greater inequity all the time" whereby "the rich will not only become richer, but they will be separated from the poor because of their ethnicity and nationality and sooner or later, the poor will hit back," he said.

The war would be "on a world scale (and) in a way, it already is," he said, citing today's terrorism which was partly an expression of disparity between the rich and poor and in the distribution of wealth.

"Do not be too sure that there cannot be some ingenuity on the part of the poor" as no one predicted the Sept 11 terror attacks despite the sophistication and intelligence-gathering of the powerful, he said.

Dr Mahathir arrived earlier with Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali after concluding an official visit to Algeria.

Also present at the dinner was King Mswati III of Swaziland, who is hosting the four-day dialogue, along with several heads of African government including President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and South Africa's Deputy President Jacob Zuma.

In his speech entitled "Co-Creating Our Destiny: The Smart Partnership Way," Dr Mahathir said that the antidote to prevent such a global disaster was for developing countries to unite and garner greater strength and in the process wield some clout in global matters.

"There are among the rich some who have a conscience, some who believe that exploitation by the rich of the poor is not right...they are the exceptions but we can form alliances with them," he said.

"But most importantly, we must put our houses in order" whereby power and wealth should be used to build and develop the economies of the Third World with the fruits of such endeavours bringing long-term gains and developing countries able to determine their own destinies.

He cited Malaysia where the rich minority comprising the Chinese and the majority rural poor Malays struck a smart partnership to share wealth through sacrifice as opposed to forcibly acquiring wealth which would not generate future wealth.

"So the rich and the poor will share the cake of prosperity, unequally at first but progressing towards greater equitability with the passage of time," he said, emphasising that there was "no overnight wealth (and) no overnight impoverishment."

He said: "It is, we in Malaysia believe, far better to have a slice of a growing cake than the whole of a disappearing cake."

The Prime Minister said that with the United Nations having abandoned the Third World and other international organisations seeming to protect

the privileged few than the welfare of the many, developing countries have only themselves to face the onslaught of globalisation and overcome the inequities that come with it.

"We must bring about smart partnerships, firstly between us, of the poor developing nations, so we may have some clout in the determination of economic regime of the world, and after that a smart partnership with the enlightened rich, of which there were a few."

Dr Mahathir said: "We must strive to bring back charity in the management of our affairs, our national and international affairs (and) we can do that if we believe in prospering our neighbours, in smart partnerships and in win-win formulas."

He nevertheless cautioned the gathering in Ezulwini against being too ambitious, saying "we must do what is right firstly within our own community, within our own nation, before we try to change the world.

"We must believe that we can do it, and most assuredly, we can," he said.

"We must be prepared to make what may seem to be personal sacrifices, but truly they are not. We must then be prepared to make national sacrifices which will prove to be no sacrifice at all (but) in the end, they will all pay back and pay back handsomely.

"That is the way to co-create our destiny, to co-create the smart partnership way," he said.

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