

14 MAR 2004

Mahathir-Changes

ACCEPT CHANGES WITH TIME TO PRESERVE ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALS, SAYS
MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 14 (Bernama) -- Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged Muslims worldwide to accept and manage changes

over time to preserve the fundamentals of Islam.

"Everything changes over time. We can resist change, be orthodox and

conservative but we cannot reject change indefinitely.

"We can either accept the changes as they come or we can modify them.

Of course we can also initiate changes ourselves. Whatever we do changes

will take place," he said in his keynote address at the Advista Arabia VI

Conference in Jeddah.

The text of his speech, titled 'The Dynamics of Change - The Malaysian

Experience', was faxed to Bernama here today.

The former Prime Minister also expressed regret over some Muslims who

reject change in order to remain as they were or as they thought they were

in the past.

He said that in Malaysia, the percentage of Muslims dropped from 99 per

cent to 60 per cent but they did not modify or manage the changes brought

about by Western (British) colonisation.

The Muslims, he said, refusing to adapt themselves to the developmental

needs of the colonisers, withdrew and isolated themselves and were marginalised as immigrant Chinese and Indians filled the needs of a country

being developed by the British for its wealth.

However, despite their small majority, he said, they remained the

country's most powerful political element, gaining cooperation from other

racings by using their power judiciously to bring stability to the country

and so enable it to develop.

Dr Mahathir said that beyond inter-racial cooperation, however, the

government system still needed to be changed as Malaysia could not revert

to the old pre-colonial feudal system where nine sultans ruled their

own
small states.

In resolving the matter, he said, a constitution providing for a parliamentary democracy with a constitutional (non executive) monarch, instead of a republic, was formulated.

Dr Mahathir also said that Malaysia would have to develop new strategies in order to manage the change brought about by the new technologies.

"As soon as a change occurs," he said, the machinery for dealing with it should be activated, the problems studied and analysed, solutions suggested and decisions made.

"The solution may be right or wrong but it is better to do something than to let things go their way. If the solution fails, corrections can be made or a new solution proposed and tried," he said.

"If we still fail, we will try again. Certainly failure to manage change will not be for want of trying," he added.

-- BERNAMA
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