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Chinese political, business leaders host dinner for Dr M

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Chinese political and business leaders tonight feted Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad at a farewell dinner in recognition of his contribution to the nation.

More than 2,500 people attended the event at the Mines Exhibition and Convention Centre in Seri Kembangan, near here, to show their appreciation to the former Prime Minister and his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

They thanked him for his 22 years of outstanding leadership in strengthening national unity, racial harmony, progress and prosperity for all Malaysians.

Dr Mahathir, visibly moved by the show of support, said he was heartened by the support he received throughout his tenure, adding that it "has been a very long struggle for me".

He said he wanted to see a balance in the distribution of the nation's wealth among all Malaysians.

"I am happy that many Chinese actually helped to achieve success of the New Economic Policy and their help has paid off," he said, adding that the nation would continue to remain peaceful and prosperous with the co-operation of all.

The event was organised by the five Chinese-based parties in the Barisan Nasional - MCA, Gerakan, Sarawak United People's Party, Sabah Progressive Party and Liberal Democratic Party - and several Chinese-based organisations.

Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, who spoke on behalf of the Chinese community, said if all Malaysians could emulate Dr Mahathir, the nation would be propelled to greater heights.

MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting, the event organising chairman, said Dr Mahathir was an exemplary visionary.

Among those present were Federation of Chinese Associations president Datuk Seri Lim Gait Tong and Associated Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Tan Sri William Cheng.