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Hold forum on combating crime

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A NEW year has been ushered in with much hope.

Many have New Year resolutions, and hope the new year brings good health, progress and prosperity.

Last year was indeed an eventful year for Malaysia but what was most significant in the political scene was the smooth transition of power from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as the fifth Prime Minister of Malaysia.

If I am asked what will be my New Year resolution, it will undoubtedly be for Malaysia to be harmonious, peaceful, united and progressive, based on a strong moral and ethical foundation.

Malaysians of all races hope the Government under the leadership of Abdullah will strengthen the economy, maintain peace and stability, bolster unity, uphold the rights of all Malaysians and strike a balance between economic, information technology, social and moral development.

We need to take stock of our values in the face of the social problems confronting us.

The past year has seen numerous social ills like the drug menace, juvenile delinquency and crime, moral degradation and the cavalier attitudes of road users.

They are an indication of declining values, which, if not addressed effectively, will jeopardise our aspiration to make Malaysia a fully developed nation.

The world today is confronted with a very disturbing phenomenon.

Wherever modernisation and economic development take place and result in better standards of living, new problems such as a decline in human values and moral degradation occur.

We not only have to cope with social problems and economic challenges but other issues of tremendous concern to racial intergration, unity and nation-building.

What is disturbing is that hardly a day passes without reports of social ills and crimes, many of which are violent in nature.

We have to find and examine the causes of these criminal acts urgently.

What is even more disturbing is the culture of violence that is perpetrated today by criminals.

The culture of violence has to be studied and remedies found before the situation deteriorates.

It may be timely for the Government to organise a public forum similar to the forum on road safety to discuss the issue of crime in our nation.

How do we arrest this situation? To me, a massive programme to inculcate good values is required at all levels.

The Government, NGOs and the entire community need to embark on a massive "Values for the Nation" programme to promote good human values in our society.