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PM: Aiding the less fortunate will keep nation peaceful

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Malaysia will remain peaceful with its people enjoying the fruits of development as long as the rich and successful in the community continue to help the less fortunate, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

The Prime Minister said although Malaysia was no longer a poor nation, the Government still expected generous and caring companies and individuals to increase their help to the under privileged.

"As long as this kind of spirit and goodwill prevails in our community, Malaysia will remain a peaceful and prosperous nation. We have no shortage of donors and volunteers in this country," he said when opening the Association of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers' new building at Bukit Kiara here.

Bangunan Bakti Siti Hasmah is named after Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali in recognition of her contributions and guidance to the welfare body, which was born 26 years ago. "Actually I got the idea for an association like Bakti during my visit to Indonesia during Tun Hussein Onn's time (Dr Mahathir was the Deputy Prime Minister then).

"I was impressed with the friendly welcoming by a similar association there and on my return, I suggested this to my wife who carried the idea on from there.

"Today Bakti is an example of our way of life, where the wives of ministers and deputy ministers still toil for the betterment of the poor and less fortunate," said Dr Mahathir, who is Bakti patron.

In her welcoming speech earlier, Dr Siti Hasmah said the opening of the "community friendly" building was the realisation of Bakti's dream of 26 years.

"We continued with our responsibility of assisting the under privileged and waited for a long time to have our own premises, which can double up as a community centre.

"As this would be my last official function as Bakti president, I take this opportunity to thank everyone within and outside Bakti who have made this dream a reality. I'm confident that Bakti will continue to receive the level of support and encouragement that it enjoys now," she said.

Dr Mahathir signed a plaque and symbolically lit a torch to mark the opening of the complex.