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Abdullah-Policies

M'SIA TO FOLLOW PATH CHARTED BY DR MAHATHIR, SAYS ABDULLAH

By: Yong Soo Heong

PUTRAJAYA, Jan 20 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will continue to follow the path charted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad towards achieving the goals of Vision 2020, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

"It is a national policy, agreed to collectively by the Cabinet and will remain as the primary driver for Malaysian government policies," the deputy prime minister told foreign and local investment bankers and fund managers at a luncheon organised by Ecmlibra Investment Bank.

Abdullah, who will succeed Dr Mahathir in October this year, said it would be short-sighted and counter productive to introduce new policies merely "to stamp my name on them."

He said that he had been constantly asked what the business community could expect from the leadership transition later this year.

"My reply has consistently been there will be continuity of major policies. Let me assure you that this answer is not a sound bite. It is a frank response on the reality of the situation," he said.

Abdullah said that he had spent 38 years in public service, both as a civil servant and as a politician, and from his experience, he had learnt that "good strategies should not be cheaply discarded."

He also said that he supported Dr Mahathir's policy on relying less on exports to drive the country's economic growth and that the domestic economy should be the driver of growth.

"I believe one of the ways forward is to find new sources of wealth, particularly for the lower income group which has only received marginal profits from our economic boom," he said.

Touching on padi planting, he said that not much thought has been given to producing more by-products other than padi and rice.

He said that padi planting should not be looked upon as a non-lucrative

venture as there were other by-products like wine, cosmetics, biscuits and raw materials for building boards that could be manufactured from the plant.

For example, he said, if the average padi yield could be increased by one tonne per hectare, food sufficiency would rise to 110 per cent from the present 60 per cent and there would also be more money in the pockets of farmers.

"This will have a positive multiplier effect on the economy and increase the velocity of money. Each additional ringgit for the poor is more readily spent compared to an additional ringgit for the rich," he said.

-- BERNAMA  
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