

PM focuses on affirmative action

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KUALA LUMPUR – The way affirmative action is carried out in Malaysia will be reviewed to make it fairer, more transparent and market-friendly.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said what worked in the past, may not work today, and Malaysia would slide backwards and lose its competitiveness without reform or changes.

"We are doing this because we are committed to Vision 2020, which was initiated by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohammad in 1990," Najib said in an interview with Martin Soong in The CNBC Conversation on Saturday.

He stressed that to maintain the status quo was not an option.

However, the commitment in terms of balancing society to make it more equitable, leading to long term stability, still remains.

"So, the essence of the New Economic Model (NEM) is not about changing the macro targets but to ensure that how we do it, results in greater success.

"By doing that, I think it would be more acceptable across the board and be seen to be fairer as well," he added.

Najib also said some people are concerned and may be in fear of change as well, but he added, this is nothing new.

Malay rights group Perkasa and Dr Mahathir have voiced their defence of the special rights of Malays under the NEP and are against any changes being made to the existing Bumiputra policy.

"They are not against us. They are talking more about Bumiputra rights. But actually, we are not taking anything away from the Bumiputras, but saying, let us do it differently," he said, according to a *Bernama* report.

Najib emphasised that what is important is to achieve better results and a more equitable society.

"At the same time, we want to be fair to the non-Bumiputras as well. We want to build a 1Malaysia."

He said the commitment is also to bring more equitable development to including Sabah and Sarawak, which is a cornerstone of the NEM, which seeks to be inclusive.

According to Najib, quite a large chunk of resources would be channeled into Sarawak and Sabah under the 10th Malaysia Plan, especially in respect of the Government Transformation Programme.

He said this encompasses for example, infrastructure development, rural roads, electricity and water supply with the bulk of resources being spent on Sarawak and Sabah.

"We are seeing results because I monitor this on a regular basis. So, things are actually happening on the ground and we will see the achievements to be much higher as we move forward and gain momentum."

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