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# 'Malaysian Way' secret to development success

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The country's transformation from backward into a confident and prosperous nation was the result of a single-minded approach to development.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said yesterday the "Malaysian Way" comprised four principles: Political stability, pragmatic policy-making, capacity building and co-ordinated execution.

"First, the Malaysian experience would have been impossible without the bedrock of political stability. From the early days of the Alliance to the Barisan Nasional of today, political stability has been built on the foundation of genuine power-sharing, compromise and tolerance," he said in his keynote address at a one-day seminar organised by the Economic Planning Unit of the Prime Minister's Department.

Some 500 participants, including EPU director-general Datuk Dr Sulaiman Mahbob, attended the seminar.

The government's policy-making had always been guided by pragmatism.

"Malaysia has never been ideological on the issue of development and we have been more than happy to co-opt various strategies from across the ideological divide to fit the needs of the times."

In the third principle of building capacity, the country had spent 20 per cent of the national budget annually on education and infrastructure.

"This strong focus on infrastructure and human capital has yielded high dividends for Malaysia and will continue to be a key enabler for future success."

The government ensured good relations with the private sector through the concepts of "Malaysia Inc" and "smart partnership".

Abdullah said private sector

participation was crucial to the success of the country's recently launched growth corridors.

"While the government continues to play its role as a facilitator and enabler of economic growth, we are calling for private investors to invest in hard and soft infrastructure to boost economic growth in the regions."

Two growth corridors have been launched: The Iskandar Development Region in southern Johor and the Northern Corridor Economic Region covering Perlis, Penang, Kedah and north Perak.

Two more corridors are to be launched in the east coast and Sabah and Sarawak.

Private sector involvement would ensure investments remained commercially viable and efficient.

He said private sector engagement was also evident in the private finance initiative concept.

"Through this approach, private contractors have an incentive to ensure that construction

and maintenance of facilities are done in a cost-effective manner."

But development policies and plans are only as good as their implementation.

"It must provide maximum benefits to the people and the country."

Abdullah said under the Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP), the government had realised the importance of effective implementation and paid careful attention to identifying the right economic strategies.

"It is a cliché to say that we have good policies but we lack implementation. As with all clichés, there is always a certain grain of truth."

Abdullah said he believed the government had improved its implementation capability.

"Projects under the 9MP are well under way, with the National Implementation Task Force acting as custodian for effective implementation of high-impact projects," he said.