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Accept change, leaders urged

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PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia is offering its Government Transformation Programme (GTP) as a model for other countries to emulate.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, in describing the transformation the country was undergoing as one of the hallmarks of the Malaysian administration, said leaders must be willing to embrace change in facing new global realities and challenges.

Leaders, he said, should strive for transformation although it was not an easy process.

"It is natural for people to resist change, to hold on to things they know and with which they are familiar with.

"Some people are fearful of the uncertainty that change brings; others are threatened by having to do things differently. It takes courage to trans-



form because it forces us to recognise that our previous practices have fallen short," he said, adding that a true leader must be able to overcome resistance to change.

Najib said this when opening the ninth Langkawi International Dialogue, which is being held outside Langkawi for the first time.

Present were Deputy Prime Min-

ister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, former prime ministers Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed and Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, and Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe.

Najib said when the government first introduced the New Economic Model (NEM), he knew that the country had to change the usual practice of getting things done while innovation must be pursued at a steadfast pace.

Roadmaps based on the GTP, NEM and the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) would enable the country to become a high-income nation by 2020.

"There is still a great deal of work to be done to push this transformation process forward, taking it from a defined set of principles and goals, turning it into concrete policies and converting them into successful execution."

Najib said the world was living in the age of transformation which was

being shaped by six factors, namely emerging economies, volatile political climates, natural catastrophes, prominent roles played by governments, the private sector, civil societies, academia and inter-governmental organisations in the international arena, climate change and the Internet revolution.

He also said that the success of the "people first" approach, embodied in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, had been emulated by Malaysia through the introduction of the GTP, ETP and NEM.

Najib also urged African countries to look towards Malaysia for products and services as opposed to obtaining them from developed countries.

"I am confident that Malaysian small- and medium-sized enterprises would have a lot to offer.

"I would go one step further and suggest the possibility of collaboration between SMEs of our countries to identify," he said, adding that this

would be an example of smart partnership cooperation in future.

The country, Najib said, was looking forward to strengthening its economic and trade relations with its dynamic African and Caribbean partners.

There was a significant increase in trade with its African partners which amounted to RM25 billion last year, an increase of 39 per cent compared with 2009, while the gross domestic product of the continent averaged 5.2 per cent annually.

Later, Najib announced that the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology would offer smart technology and creativity degree scholarships, worth RM12 million, to students from African countries participating in LID this year.

These scholarships include 45 full tuition scholarships, 450 partial scholarships and five-day training in transformational leadership for 150 government officers.