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Dr M: Affirmative action under NEP has finally paid off

PETALING JAYA: Affirmative action under the New Economic Policy (NEP) has resulted in Malaysia having a more equitable multi-racial society than most countries, said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The former prime minister said the successful implementation of the NEP has, among other things, narrowed the gap in wealth distribution between Malays and Chinese.

Malays now own 19% of the

country's wealth compared to just 2% before the policy was introduced, he said.

"The disparity is still there but it is much reduced," he said in a blog posting.

He said it would seem that Malaysia has done a better job of building a more equitable multi-racial society than most multi-racial countries.

"That's including the United States where the policy of equality

of treatment, such as meritocracy, has not yielded tangible results," he added.

Dr Mahathir, who also gave his views about an article published in *Foreign Affairs* magazine (an American journal on international relations and US foreign policy), said that India and South Africa had tried to implement affirmative action but the results were not as good as that of Malaysia.

The former premier pointed out

that while the United States practises equality and had elected an African-American as President, the fact remains that most African-Americans were poor and their per capita income was well below the national average.

"Being equal with the whites has not benefitted the blacks much," he said.

He said the magazine, which studied Malaysia's record on race relations, admitted that despite

affirmative action under the NEP, Malaysia's economy did better than most developing countries where races lived in relative harmony with no serious clashes.

"*Foreign Affairs* seems to admit that Malaysia's affirmative action has merit. Like the reversal of opinion on the fixed exchange rate policy, there now seems to be a reversal of condemnation of our affirmative action, at least by the magazine," he said.

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