

Newspaper	MALAYSIAN RESERVE
Date	23/11/2018

# Govt in the middle of drafting national agro-food policy, says Dr Mahathir

Malaysian Reserve - 23/11/2018 18.8

*PM says this is in line with govt's focus on making the food sector more relevant and competitive*

PRIME Minister (PM) Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government is in the process of drafting the National Agro-Food Policy 2021-2030, the objective of which is to spur the modernisation of the agro-food sector.

He said the Agro-Food 2.0 policy is crucial in making the food sector more competitive with the Industry 4.0.

The policy will emphasise the development of infrastructure and the use of modern technology, the provision of human capital and commercialisation of agriculture including innovation in the key sectors, he said.

"This is in line with the government's focus on making the food sector more relevant and more competitive," he said when opening the Malaysian Agriculture, Horticulture and Agro-Tourism Exhibition (MAHA) 2018 at the Malaysia Agro Exposition Park in Serdang yesterday. Themed "Our Food Our Future", the biennial exhibition will be held



Indirectly, all food sector supply chains will be capitalised to the maximum, according to Dr Mahathir

for 11 days until Dec 2.

Also present were Dr Mahathir's wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Salahuddin Ayub and Chief Secretary to the Government Datuk Seri Dr Ismail Bakar.

Dr Mahathir said the new policy entails restructuring strategies to

expedite modernisation, apart from managing demand and supply.

The policy would also streamline government and private sector investments for infrastructure development, human capital building for agriculture, research and development (R&D), commercialisation and innovation, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government will develop alternative inputs and new sources of income like coconut, watermelon, starfruit and durian, which have a huge demand locally and globally.

He said the new sources would be exploited via various R&D efforts and other measures, including from

the aspect of business models, logistical support in terms of collection and distribution, refrigeration facilities and optimisation of transportation machinery.

"Indirectly, all food sector supply chains will be capitalised to the maximum. Farmers, livestock breeders and agropreneurs will have a new economic frontier, access to a wider market and a distribution chain that is more efficient," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the agriculture sector will remain important and relevant because it is no longer seen as food production per se but accepted as a vital factor in assuring food security.

"Although food security is interpreted as sufficient supply of food for each citizen at any one time, whether locally produced or imported, Malaysia must ensure a huge portion of its supply comes from local farmers," he said.

Meanwhile, he said the contribution of the agriculture sector to GDP was still small, at just 8.17% or RM374 billion last year, when in fact it has huge potential.

The PM also called for MAHA to be the best platform for farmers, breeders, fishermen and agropreneurs to introduce their products and services to the public. — *Bernama*