

'HELP CREATE JOBS OF THE FUTURE'

Drive innovation and competitiveness, Dr M urges business community

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PRIME Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged the business community to help drive competitiveness and innovation to create jobs of the future.

It was also essential, he added, for the public and private sectors to work together to drive the development of an Industry 4.0 ecosystem to optimise sources of talent.

"There is much to be done to ensure our human capital possesses the right skills to add value and do the creative, empathetic and interactive in a technology-driven landscape," he said at a roundtable discussion with the International Chambers of Commerce here yesterday.

He said Industry 4.0 would change the types of jobs needed across all market sectors.

"There have been a lot of narratives centring on the Fourth Industrial Revolution, artificial intelligence, innovation, automation, Internet of Things and other technological advancement and how all these are expected to impact all industries.

"It is important to note, however, that while change and disruption are the new normal, talent and their developmental



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad with participants in the International Chambers of Commerce roundtable discussion in Putrajaya yesterday. PIC BY AHMAD IRHAM MOHD NOOR

needs continue to be vital."

Dr Mahathir said in ensuring Malaysia remained a preferred choice for foreign investors, the government was mindful of the need to provide a conducive environment to encourage the inflow of foreign capital and technology, and to strengthen the competitiveness of Malaysia's industries in the global market.

He said he hoped that the dialogue would be the first of a series of engagements between the government and foreign business community.

"The dialogue's theme, 'Empowering Malaysia's Workforce, Nurturing Talent for the Future', reflects our aspiration to nurture and develop highly skilled, knowledgeable and innovative

human capital to meet the needs of industry, both now and in the future."

Dr Mahathir also said the government would be reviewing labour laws.

This would ensure greater transparency and further safeguard the welfare of workers, he said.

The Pakatan Harapan government, in its 14th General Election manifesto, had promised to review labour laws, namely the Trade Unions Act 1959, the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994, the Industrial Relations Act 1967 and the Employment Act 1955.

He said the theme of the dialogue also reaffirmed the four priority areas highlighted during the Mid-Term Review of the 11th

Malaysia Plan, which was presented last year.

The priorities are reforming the labour market; improving labour efficiency and productivity; enhancing access to quality education and training; and fostering stronger industry-academia linkages.

"These reforms are crucial, not only in developing human capital to support our future economic growth but also in addressing job mismatches that contribute to graduate underemployment, unemployment and slow wage growth as well as over-dependence on foreign labour.

"All these have serious implications for the economy and for businesses."

Later at a press conference, Dr

Mahathir said the International Chambers of Commerce welcomed the government's effort for labour law reforms, particularly on the orientation of training of workers.

He said there was a need to train and upgrade local talent to obtain higher skills, moving from machine assembly to operating and maintaining them.

"Before, the investment was in the assembly of products, but today, it is all about programming robots and programming automated machines, so the skills are different."

He added that the chambers had expressed willingness to send their talent to Malaysia, and for Malaysia to send people to study in their countries and work at their industrial plants.