

Change mindset to escape poverty, PM tells farmers, fishermen

NOT- 8/1/2019 19.5

MARANG: Farmers and fishermen have been urged to change the old mindset of depending on government handouts and instead, embrace new technology to escape poverty.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said fishermen should strive to become more innovative to improve their standing.

"Shed outdated ways. Cultivate new methods and diversify to increase productivity and improve your earnings. Do not just depend on government incentives, subsidies and handouts, for you will remain poor forever.

"You should instead strive to find ways to enrich yourselves so that you can be proud of your own initiatives and efforts," he told farmers and fishermen at the Marang district town hall yesterday.

Dr Mahathir called on farmers and fishermen to do away with traditional ways and become more innovative and versatile.

"For instance, make use of modern machinery and technology to increase productivity.

"Padi farmers should not restrict themselves to just planting, but diversify into processing their harvests to earn extra income. Likewise, fishermen should not stick with their traditional boats but look at operating deep-sea fishing vessels that have cold

storage facilities," he said.

Present were Terengganu Menteri Besar Dr Ahmad Sam-suri Mokhtar, Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Salahuddin Ayub and Housing and Local Government Deputy Minister Senator Raja Datuk Kamarul Bahrin Shah Raja Ahmad.

Dr Mahathir said the federal government would do everything possible to lift the socio-economy of farmers and fishermen.

"If possible, small farmers with a few hectares of land should consolidate with others to form larger entities.

"This way, you can share your resources, minimise overhead, become more efficient and enjoy greater revenue."

He urged farmers not to be too dependent on commodities like rubber and palm oil given their fluctuating prices.

"Supplement your income by venturing into other crops, like vegetables and fruits, so that when the prices of rubber and palm oil drop, you can fall back on the other produce.

"Use the spare time for other income-generating activities like cottage industries to manufacture *keropok*, handicraft products from rattan and bamboo, and basket weaving," he said, adding that such activities only needed small capital.