

Need for new indicator to measure nation's wealth - Dr Mahathir

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09/10/2018

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said there is a need for a new indicator to measure the wealth of the nation.

He said the calculation on the basis of averaging is not very accurate.

"We need to recalibrate. Do we get really something real when we talk about GDP and per capita income?," he said in his closing address at the Khazanah Megatrends Forum 2018, here today.

Giving an example, he said that if there were 1,000 people and there was only one millionaire, the average income of the 1,000 is RM1,000.

"But there is only one millionaire and the rest have no money at all. That is why we need to find other indicators of wealth of the nation.

"If we go only by per capita income we may have equitability but in fact there is no equitability because the per capita income is due to the very high earning of the top few while the bottom have barely enough to buy food or to seek shelter with a roof over their head," he added.

Dr Mahathir added that the new indicator could be anything but its standard must be able to apply to the real situation.

On another note, he said the government must work towards rebalancing the distribution of the national wealth for the people.

He said the previous government did not care much about equitability in the distribution of wealth of the country.

As such, he said the current government has promised to correct the imbalances in society.

"In order to do this, we need to have more professionals running government institutions and companies. We also should have good governance and management in the business sector," he added.

The prime minister also reiterated that his administration encouraged and welcomed all foreign direct investments (FDIs) into Malaysia.

"We will be very hospitable to all investors, whether foreign or local, but most importantly it is about creating employment and opportunities for our people," he said.

He said as far as the government was concerned, FDIs should be about investors bringing in capital and technology as well setting up operations and branches in Malaysia, and help the country grow.

"We don't consider purchasing land in order to build towns or settlements for foreign people using foreign labour as FDI. We are not discriminating against any particular people or country.

"We want investments in this country to benefit not only the investors but also the people in this country," he said.

Speaking to reporters later, Dr Mahathir said the government would reassess the decision to re-tender the unfinished underground works for the Mass Rapid Transit Line Two (MRT2) project.

He was queried on a report that the move by the Finance Ministry to terminate the contract

to build the unfinished underground portion of the MRT2 would result in over 20,000 job losses in more than 600 Malaysian companies.

Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng was reported as saying yesterday that the billions of ringgit saved through the re-tendering exercise would reduce the debt and interest the government would have to repay.

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