

## **Kemas' role must be in sync with society's needs - Dr Mahathir**

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SERDANG, Feb 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants the role and functions of the Department of Community Development (Kemas) which was set up in 1961 to be in sync with the expectations, needs and wishes of the present government.

He said every member of Kemas must understand the government's philosophy, policies and aspirations which will then be relayed to the rural communities with the hope that they will also have the same aspirations.

He said Kemas members must undertake changes and be flexible in their actions as well as be focused on providing the best service in line with the department's aspirations as catalyst for the well-being of the rural community.

"Kemas members must not just play a role in take social issues to the authorities," he said.

"They are the right people to disseminate information on the policies of the government," he said in his speech at the launch of the Kemas Day celebrations at the Malaysia Agro Exposition Park Serdang (MAEPS) here today.

The text of his speech at the event which was attended by more than 4,000 Kemas staff was read out by Rural Development Minister Datuk Seri Rina Mohd Harun.

Kemas has a total workforce of 17,905, including 851 permanent and 9,768 contract staff.

Dr Mahathir also said Kemas staff should work to improve the department's credibility as an rural development organisation.

As agents of development and change who are also the intermediaries between the people and the government, he said Kemas members must equip themselves with knowledge and skills, especially in areas related to the department's role and responsibilities.

He also urged Kemas to give priority to social development and be the government's backbone in its efforts to plan and develop the nation in a more organised and effective manner.

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