

Share wealth with less fortunate, says Abdullah

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KUALA LUMPUR: Corporations and individuals should share their wealth with the less fortunate in communities in which they operate.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the Government needed all Malaysians to join hands in ensuring a brighter future for all.

"It is important that those of us who have, by the grace of God, managed to accumulate a measure of material wealth, share our good fortune with those in need of assistance.

"God willing, good deeds will not go unrewarded," he said at the launch of the ECM Libra Foundation.

Abdullah's speech was read by Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein.

The Prime Minister said the Government would take the lead role in developing the nation and helping people but individuals and corporations could accelerate progress by making contributions to the community.

He said he had always believed that all Malaysians had a role to play in ensuring that the Vision 2020 agenda was successful.

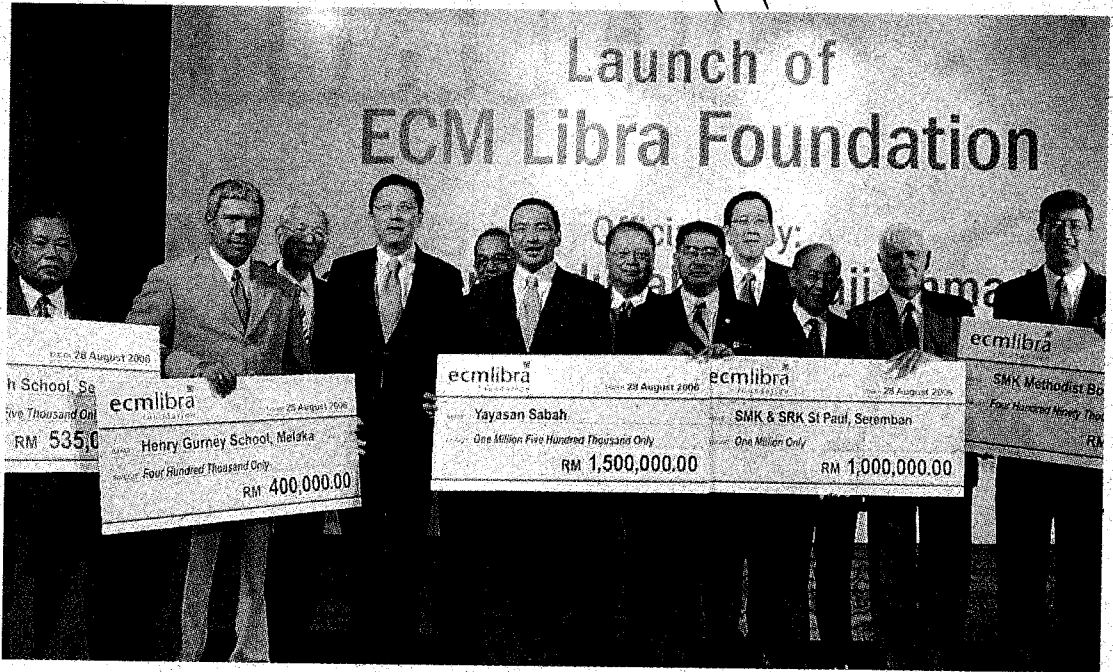
Abdullah was encouraged that there were still many charitable Malaysians willing to help the Government develop human capital.

He commended the founders of the foundation — Datuk Kalimullah Hassan, Lim Kian Onn and David Chua Ming Huat — for helping the needy and underprivileged obtain a better education.

They have collectively donated a total of RM63 million so far to the foundation which has Tan Sri Azman Hashim, Kalimullah, Lim, Chua, Datuk Roger Tan and Tan Sri Sak Cheng Lum as its board of trustees.

Kalimullah, also ECM Libra chairman, said in his speech that the Prime Minister's target of developing human capital was the driving force behind the foundation.

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Hishammuddin (sixth from left) in a group photo with recipients of aid from the ECM Libra Foundation at the foundation's launching ceremony yesterday.

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"Many a child has had to drop out of school and unarmed with basic knowledge, has had to struggle and fend in the fields and streets, perpetuating a vicious cy-

cle."

He said when he and his two partners started their business some years ago, it was always their intention to give back to society, particularly to the poorest, irrespective of race or religion.

This was to ensure they were not deprived of education just because they did not have the money.

"It was, therefore, the easiest thing for us to do when Lim suggested we channel 70 per cent of our personal resources upon listing into an education foundation to help people realise their dreams."

The foundation, set up in 2004, has to date, provided aid to schools to improve resource centres, canteens, hostels, computer labs, teachers' rooms, toilets, landscaping and building more classrooms.

"We have also provided loans and scholarships for poor Malaysians to pursue basic and tertiary education."

The Government, he said, had always provided the largest allocations for education in the budget and its five-year development

plans.

"Yet we realise, this will not be enough as there are many other priorities.

"We just wanted to do the little that we could to complement the Government's efforts and those undertaken by many other private individuals and corporations who have had a long history of philanthropy."

Among the schools and organisations that had benefited from the foundation are SMK Methodist Boys' Schools, Penang; SMJK Chung Hwa, Seremban; SRJK Chi Hua, Seremban; SMK St Paul, Seremban; SRK St Paul, Seremban; SMK Sri Istana, Klang; SK Convent Tanah Rata, Cameron Highlands; Yayasan Sabah, Henry Gurney School; Monfort Youth Centre, Malacca; Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre and the NST newspaper sponsorship programme.

Those who wish to benefit from the foundation can visit www.ecmlibrafoundation.com for details and to download the appropriate form.