

## Tun Mahathir Praises Najib's Leadership

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 30 (Bernama) -- Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has praised the administration of Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak upon receiving feedback and opinion from outsiders on matters pertaining to the country.

He said the receptiveness from the current administration had led to a better-shaped policy which eased everyone on sharing and expressing their thoughts which resulted better support from the public.

"I must confess that Najib and the administration is quite open, in this sense. When they need to get consultation from anybody, they will do so, and I have also given my opinion on certain occasions, for example the transformation process," he said during the question and answer (Q&A) session after delivering his keynote address at the Malaysia-Europe Forum (MEF), here Tuesday.

However, responding to a question, Dr Mahathir reiterated that he had no plans to make a comeback and he would continue giving opinions and criticisms through his blog.

"For me, to come back and be directly involved is out of the question. Once I'm out, I would not come back. I just hope that they would read my blog..that's as far as I can go," he said.

Responding to a question about the people's perception on the 1Malaysia concept, Dr Mahathir noted that the national unity concept could only be achieved once the people identified themselves as Malaysians.

He said the concept was formally targeted during the launching of Vision 2020 which he announced in 1991.

"In Vision 2020, which I delivered in 1991, the first item that we wanted to achieve was national unity. The concept could be achieved if all Malaysians forget their past, speak one language, and identify themselves as Malaysians.

"Today, I found that people are still talking 'I'm a Chinese Malaysian, Malay Malaysian, Indian Malaysian which make the interpretation of 1Malaysia very difficult for people of different races," he said.

Speaking on the government's Economic Transformation Programme (ETP), Dr Mahathir said Malaysia should support more local industries to help them generate a stronger financial income.

Citing Korea and Japan for example, Dr Mahathir said those countries should be emulated on how they improved and developed their own financial integrity without depending too much on foreign direct investments (FDI).

"What they (Japan and Korea) did was acquiring foreign resources and technology and at the same time improved their own technology and grew into giant corporations. But in Malaysia, we allowed foreigners to come here and benefited from the low cost of labour.

"The time has come to change. We should support local industry. We have given incentives to foreign companies, why don't we just give to local companies?" he said.

The forum themed "Looking Back In Order To Move Forward" was held to ensure that Malaysia and Europe had mutual understanding of their respective policies, particularly on the question of investment.

It was attended by 250 people including businessmen, government officials, academicians and representatives of student organisations in the country and abroad.

-- BERNAMA

