

NO 59: (F)
ASEAN-MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, JAN. 14⁸² (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY CALLED ON ASEAN COUNTRIES TO INJECT NEW IDEAS FOR INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE IDEA OF JOINT MARKETING AS A STEP TO BOOST THEIR RESPECTIVE INDUSTRIALISATION PROGRAMMES SHOULD BE SERIOUSLY EXAMINED.

OPENING THE 12TH ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS MEETING (AEM) HERE, HE SAID A FORMULA COULD BE WORKED OUT WHEREBY THE COUNTRY WITH THE BIGGEST MARKET WOULD ENJOY THE MOST BENEFITS EVEN IF THE PRODUCT WAS MANUFACTURED BY A SMALLER COUNTRY.

+IN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMMES, ASEAN SHOULD PURSUE THIS FURTHER, PERHAPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR PLAYING A MORE VIGOROUS ROLE, + HE SAID.

IT WAS ENCOURAGING TO NOTE THAT THE ASEAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY WAS NOW TAKING AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN THE COMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR POINTED OUT THE GOVERNMENTS OF ASEAN HAD ALREADY SET UP A MACHINERY FOR INDUSTRIAL COMPLEMENTATION BY WAY OF SIGNING THE BASIC AGREEMENT ON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEMENTATION IN JUNE LAST YEAR. -- BERNAMA MORE 1605/A1

ASEAN-MAHATHIR 2 KUALA LUMPUR

HE STRESSED THAT INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION IN ASEAN ENVISAGED THAT ASEAN GOVERNMENTS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR SHOULD COOPERATE CLOSELY TO STRENGTHEN THE ECONOMIC POSITION OF ASEAN.

+IN THIS REGARD ONE SHOULD NOT LOOK OUT FOR WHAT ONE STANDS TO LOSE OUT BUT, ONE SHOULD LOOK FOR WHAT THE GROUP HAS TO GAIN IN THE PROCESS, + HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER EMPHASISED THE NEED FOR ASEAN MEMBERS TO NARROW THE FRONT OF THEIR RELATIONS INTO AREAS OF IMMEDIATE PRIORITY AND URGENCY TO THEIR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING.

HE NOTED THAT THE AEM HAD ALREADY IDENTIFIED ENERGY, SHIPPING AND ACCESS TO MARKETS AS CRUCIAL AREAS TO ASEAN.

HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE RELEVANT COMMITTEES WOULD PAY

SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THESE SECTORS IN FORMULATING THEIR PROJECT PROPOSALS.

HE TOLD THE MINISTERS FROM INDONESIA, THE PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE, THAILAND AND MALAYSIA THAT IN FORMULATING PROJECTS, THEY SHOULD HAVE A CLEAR OVERALL PICTURE OF THE OBJECTIVES AND DIRECTION OF THE ASEAN ECONOMIC THRUST AND TAILOR THE REQUIREMENTS ACCORDINGLY.

+UNLESS THIS IS DONE THE VARIOUS COMMITTEES WILL BE PURSUING THEIR OWN SEPARATE COURSES INSTEAD OF WORKING IN TANDEM TO MEET ASEAN'S PRIORITY NEEDS,+ HE WARNED. -- BERNAMA MORE 1630/A1

ASEAN--MAHATHIR @ KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID ASEAN COUNTRIES MUST CONSTANTLY PROMOTE CLOSE AND INTEGRATED ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AMONG THEM.

HE STRESSED THAT AS FAR AS MALAYSIA WAS CONCERNED, ASEAN REMAINED IN THE FOREFRONT IN ITS FOREIGN POLICY.

+THE RATIONALE BEHIND THIS GOVERNMENT'S THINKING IN THIS REGARD IS THE VITAL ROLE OF ASEAN AS A STABILISING INFLUENCE, AND AS CATALYST IN DEVELOPING THE ECONOMIC RESILIENCE OF THE REGION,+ HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT NO COUNTRY COULD PROSPER ALONE IN A REGION THAT WAS IN TURMOIL AND UNSTABLE.

+TO PROSPER WE HAVE TO HAVE THE KIND OF REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT THAT IS CONDUCTIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH,+ HE SAID.

MALAYSIA'S ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF ASEAN COOPERATION WAS THEREFORE NOT ALTRUISTIC. IT WAS AN ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST AND BECAUSE IT WAS SO, MALAYSIA PLACED THE INTEREST OF ASEAN AS A TOP PRIORITY.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT ASEAN HAD BECOME AN IMPORTANT PLATFORM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CLOSER RELATIONS WITH ADVANCED COUNTRIES AS WELL AS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS.

-- BERNAMA MORE 1635/A1

ASEAN-MAHATHIR 4 KUALA LUMPUR

"ASEAN, THEREFORE, HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS," HE SAID.

IN VIEW OF THIS, THERE WAS A NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE MACHINERY OF ITS COOPERATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES.

IN THE FIELD OF TRADE, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IT WAS HEARTENING TO NOTE THAT INTRA-ASEAN TRADE NOW EXCEEDED US\$10 BILLION (ABOUT M\$23 BILLION) MEASURED AT CURRENT PRICES COMPARED TO US\$2.3 BILLION (ABOUT M\$5.29 BILLION) IN 1970.

TO DATE 6,581 ITEMS HAD BEEN GIVEN TARIFF PREFERENCES IN THE EFFORTS TO BOOST AND EXPAND INTRA-REGIONAL TRADE AND 1,948 MORE ITEMS WOULD BE ADOPTED DURING THE CURRENT MEETING.

ON THE PROGRESS IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID DUE ATTENTION HAD TO BE GIVEN TO SHIPPING.

HE POINTED OUT THAT ASEAN COUNTRIES WERE HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON EXTERNAL SERVICES AND THE RISING FREIGHT CHARGES WERE AN ADDITIONAL BURDEN TO THEIR BALANCE OF PAYMENTS.

HE FELT THAT ASEAN COULD PROFITABLY COOPERATE IN THIS AREA TO ACHIEVE SELF RELIANCE IN SHIPPING TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH CARRIAGE OF ASEAN TRADE NOT ONLY TO OVERSEAS MARKET BUT WITHIN THE ASEAN REGION AS WELL. -- BERNAMA MORE 1700/A1

ASEAN-MAHATHIR 5 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ALSO DREW THE ATTENTION OF THE DELEGATES TO THE NEED OF INTENSIFYING COOPERATION IN THE ENERGY SECTOR.

HE POINTED OUT THAT ASEAN AS A WHOLE CONSTITUTED A MAJOR PRODUCER OF CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SUCH AS GAS AND PETROLEUM. YET THEY LACKED INFRASTRUCTURE AND EXPERTISE AND TECHNOLOGY TO FULLY EXPLOIT THEIR NATURAL RESOURCES.

"ENORMOUS INVESTMENT IS REQUIRED IF WE WISH TO ESTABLISH AN ALL ENCOMPASSING GAS AND PETROLEUM INDUSTRY BUT THIS IS NOT BEYOND OUR CAPABILITIES AND THE PROBLEMS ARE NOT INSURMOUNTABLE," HE SAID.

HE URGED THE MEETING TO TAKE AN URGENT LOOK AT THE POTENTIAL FOR ASEAN COLLABORATION IN THIS SECTOR. -- BERNAMA MORE 1706/A1

NO74: (F)

ASEAN-MAHATHIR 6 KUALA LUMPUR

EARLIER, TRADE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER TENGKU AHMAD RITHAUDDEEN, WHO IS CHAIRING THE MEETING, SAID THE ECONOMIC MINISTERS WOULD INITIATE DISCUSSIONS THAT WOULD ENABLE THEM TO MAKE MEANINGFUL DECISIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE VARIOUS PROGRAMMES FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION.

THEY WOULD OVER THE NEXT TWO DAYS REVIEW THE REPORTS OF THE VARIOUS ECONOMIC COMMITTEES, THE ASEAN DIALOGUE WITH THIRD PARTNERS, THE JOINT ASEAN APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES SUCH AS INTERNATIONAL COMMODITY PROBLEMS, ECONOMIC COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, MULTI-LATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS AND THE MULTI-FIBRE ARRANGEMENT. -- BERNAMA 1709/A1