

Stop ganging up on, us, Dr M tells rich nations

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today criticised developed countries that have "ganged up into economic communities" solely to stop goods from developing countries from entering their markets.

These countries, he said, controlled the trading of primary commodities through exclusive marketing clubs.

Developing countries need to venture into processing and manufacturing to advance economically but the measures taken by some developed countries prevent such advancement and condemn developing countries to permanent poverty.

The Prime Minister also took to task some developed countries for "undeclared antagonism" when formulating education policies.

He said some Governments, under pressure of national, social, economic or political condi-

tions, make decisions which consciously discriminate against developing countries and also undermine international co-operation.

Environment

"The charging of high tuition fees and imposition of restrictive quotas for students from abroad are examples of this short-sighted trend. This short-term gain in terms of fees cannot offset their long-term loss of goodwill."

Dr Mahathir, who was opening the 30th consultative committee meeting of the Colombo Plan, called on developed countries to stop such discrimination and instead assist developing countries to become developed.

He called for an increase in the resources devoted to scientific and technical education and training.

By increasing the level of "absorptive capacity" of developing countries, through vigorous scientific and technological manpower training programmes, they would be

able to "leap frog" a few stages of the development process.

This, he said, will enable them to apply some of the latest technologies in their industries and will help them to become more competitive and contribute towards lower living cost.

Dr Mahathir also reaffirmed Malaysia's commitment to the Colombo Plan and its spirit of international friendship, mutual co-operation and understanding.

In urging all member countries to endeavour to create a favourable international environment for rapid and sustained economic growth, he said

such an environment should seek to provide continued access to markets by developing countries.

The six-day meeting is attended by 23 member countries while three countries are attending as observers. The Colombo Plan's membership also include eight international organisations.

The Colombo Plan launched in 1951 is an association of independent countries for international co-operation to assist developing countries in Asia and Pacific region in their economic and social development.