

To push dadah and Antarctica issues

Best chance yet for Dr M at UN

THE United Nations invitation to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to attend its 40th anniversary celebrations presents Malaysia with its best opportunity yet to push ahead with two of the issues it has been trying hard to impress upon the world community.

The dadah problem, which has become truly global, and making Antarctica the common heritage of mankind will have their most eloquent spokesman — should Dr Mahathir accept the invite — present their case before what is likely to be the largest ever gathering of Heads of State or Government.

Dr Mahathir's forthrightness in putting across his arguments and his penchant for calling a spade just that — a reputation he has been acquiring following his speeches at international forums over the years — will ensure that the leaders will not only listen to Malaysia's viewpoints but also consider them seriously.

At last count, more than 60 Heads of State or Governments had accepted the invitation for the session, scheduled to begin on Sept 17. UN officials are keeping mum, obviously for security reasons, but the leaders may include United States' President Ronald Reagan. President Francois

Mitterrand of France, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Britain and possibly Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

At the coming session, Dr Mahathir may be able to propose the setting up of a UN organisation to wage a global war against drug abuse and narcotics traffickers, a suggestion he made at an Asean ministerial meeting in Kuala Lumpur in July.

The coming General Assembly session is expected to debate the setting up of a UN Committee on Antarctica.

Appeal

UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar has asked world leaders to attend the session to "enhance its significance."

He looks to the session, scheduled to begin on Sept 17, as another occasion to review the performance of the UN over the past four decades.

But, more importantly, he sees it as an opportunity for member States to re-dedicate themselves to the principles and

—By M. GOVIND NAIR (Third in c

purposes of the charter, to promote interest in the work of the organisation and support for its efforts and to reinvigorate international co-operation in all fields of human endeavour.

UN Assistant Secretary-General Robert Muller, in charge of planning the commemoration, says the session will go beyond the ceremonial and many of the high-level visitors are expected to use the opportunity for face-to-face talks about world problems.

As far as Dr Mahathir is concerned, he also has perhaps some unfinished business to attend to at the coming session.

He was one of the eight world leaders who made a joint appeal on June 26, the day the UN Charter was signed 40 years ago, to all the 159 member States to re-commit themselves to the world body and the principles of its charter.

It would only be proper that Dr Mahathir attends the commemorative session and announces Malaysia's firm re-

commitment to the UN so as to make meaningful the appeal he made in June.

The coming session will more or less fulfil a recommendation made by a meeting of past and present presidents of the UN General Assembly that it consider the possibility of organising its sessions in such a manner that from time to time Heads of State or Government could hold summit meetings on specific issues during the period of the general debate.

Neutral

Current General Assembly president Paul J.F. Lusaka of Zambia says he hopes to see at the coming session "one of the greatest gatherings of Heads of State or Government ever held."

"The time has come when the UN must be used as a meeting-place and instrument for decision-making by Heads of State or Government," he adds.

The role of the UN as a useful neutral meeting place was underlined in Moscow recently when the editor of the official newspaper, *Pravda*, said that Mr Gorbachev might meet Mr Reagan at the coming General Assembly session.

Suggestions

This augurs well for a United Nations set to celebrate its 40th birthday but having criticism hurled at it in almost every direction.

That is why Mr Perez de Cuellar and other UN senior officials hope the attendance of world leaders at the coming session in a symbolic show of their support

affecting the future of mankind;

"The number and length of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly be reduced;

"The flood of documents produced at the UN be cut down; and

"The UN ensure tight management and efficient use of resources and avoid the appearance of extravagance or administrative irresponsibility."

Mr Perez de Cuellar hopes for a peace-

ful, constructive and commemorative session, to conclude with member States adopting a declaration of re-dedication to the UN Charter on Oct 24, the date in 1945 when it went into force.

He says: "May I express the fervent hope that every effort will be made to have the year 1985 stand out laudably as a year of peace, conflict resolution, restraint, international co-operation and friendship among nations." — Bernama

series to mark United Nations' 40th anniversary)

may help allay many private citizens' negative perception of the world body.

Many suggestions have been made on how the UN can improve its operations and reduce the harsh words thrown at it from Governments and people.

The meeting of the UN General Assembly presidents also suggested, among other things, that:

"The General Assembly debate focus its attention on one of two main topics of discussions of issues