

# Asean backs Dr M as meeting chairman

- 6 JUN 1987

**KUALA LUMPUR, Fri.** — All Asean member countries have expressed strong support for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as the chairman of the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking to be held in Vienna next month.

Foreign Minister Datuk Abu Hassan Omar also told a Press conference today on his return from his four-day familiarisation tour of Asean member countries that the support shown was overwhelming.

"They agreed that Dr Mahathir is the better candidate for the chairmanship, being a Prime Minister from an area where drug abuses are serious. He should be able to tell the world about the scourge of drugs and their effects on humans," he said.

Datuk Abu Hassan also said that Indonesia would instruct its ambassadors in areas not covered by Malaysia to lobby for Dr Mahathir's candidacy.

While there, he added, Indonesian Foreign Minister Professor Mochtar Kusumatmadja had also pledged to intensify co-operation in the Asean context in fighting drug abuse and trafficking.

On the Vietnamese refugees, Indonesia was briefed by Datuk Haji Abu Hassan on the current situation.

Indonesia was told that many refugees were still being retained in Malaysian transit camps, he said.

While in Bangkok, Datuk Haji Abu Hassan and his counterpart discussed the issue of fisheries.

"Next month Malaysia and

Thailand will resume high level negotiations on the proposed bilateral fisheries agreement," he said.

## Mechanism

He added that the major issues that are yet to be settled between the two countries were those pertaining to an area of co-operation, insurance and funding of the joint-venture on fishing.

"Wisma Putra is playing an active role in this matter, although the discussions will continue to be conducted by officials of the Ministry of Agriculture," he said.

Datuk Haji Abu Hassan also touched on the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Commission that will facilitate the mechanism for discussions on all bilateral issues except those covered by the Malaysian-Thai General Border Committee.

"Both sides agreed to the establishment of the joint commission and preparations are already on going for the relevant agreement pertaining to the commission," he said.

In Manila Datuk Haji Abu Hassan was briefed by the Philippines Foreign Minister on the Moro National Liberation Front and the question of Muslim autonomy in Southern Mindanao.

"We hope that an amicable solution can be found and that the Muslims in Philippines could be given autonomy taking into account previous efforts and areas of agreements between the two sides," he said.

Datuk Haji Abu Hassan was also briefed by Singapore Foreign Minister Mr S. Dhanabalan on the preparations for the Asean Ministerial Meeting and the Post-Ministerial Conference to be held in the middle of next month.