

0539

U E798 AAE  
MAHATHIR-CPA

KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT 1 (BERNAMA) -- WHILE MALAYSIA IS AT TIMES CRITICAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH, IT RECOGNISES THE USEFULNESS OF THE COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION (CPA) IN SPREADING THE ROLE AND PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICES IN A PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE CRITICISED THE COMMONWEALTH BECAUSE FAR TOO OFTEN, IT DID NOT LIVE UP TO ITS NAME ADDING THAT OFTEN THERE WAS NOT EVEN A GRAIN OF UNDERSTANDING AMONG MEMBER COUNTRIES.

+THE CPA IS COMMENDABLE AS MATTERS RELATED TO THE WELFARE OF COUNTRIES ARE DELIBERATED AT ITS MEETINGS AND THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE GAINED FROM SUCH MEETINGS HELP THEM TO UNDERSTAND THEIR PROBLEMS BETTER AND MAY CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS ATTAINING SOLUTIONS,+ HE SAID WHEN OPENING THE 33RD CPA CONFERENCE AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE HERE.

HE SAID THE CONSTANT EXCHANGE OF IDEAS, VISITS AND INTERMINGLING OF PARLIAMENTARIANS DURING THE VARIOUS CONFERENCES OF THE CPA CANNOT BUT HEIGHTEN THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT PARLIAMENT WAS ALL ABOUT.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO SAID THAT OF LATE THERE HAD BEEN A TENDENCY TO IGNORE THE UNITED NATIONS AS A MULTI-LATERAL ORGANISATION, ADDING THAT SUCH A TENDENCY WAS IN FAVOUR OF BILATERALISM OR LIMITED SMALL GROUPS.

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MAHATHIR-CPA 2 KUALA LUMPUR

HE SAID IN MANY INSTANCES THE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE MEETINGS, ATTENDED ONLY BY THESE SMALL GROUPS, ADVERSELY AFFECTED MANY OTHER COUNTRIES.

CITING AN EXAMPLE, HE SAID THAT AS A RESULT OF MEETINGS OF THE GROUP OF SEVEN (LEADING WESTERN INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES) MANY POOR COUNTRIES HAD BEEN MADE POORER.

+THE EXCHANGE RATES OF DIFFERENT CURRENCIES HAVE BEEN MANIPULATED SO THAT SUDDENLY POOR COUNTRIES FIND THEIR EXTERNAL DEBTS HAVE BEEN DOUBLED AND THEIR EXPORT EARNINGS REDUCED,+ HE ADDED.

+WE MUST RETURN TO MULTI-LATERALISM. THE CPA, BEING ITSELF A MULTI-NATIONAL BODY, MUST SUPPORT MULTI-LATERALISM AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE UN.+

ON MALAYSIA BEING A MULTI-RACIAL COUNTRY, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID SINCE INDEPENDENCE, THE COUNTRY HAD BEEN TRYING TO FOSTER RACIAL HARMONY AND ADMITTED THAT THIS WAS NOT AN EASY TASK.

+WE ARE A MULTI-RACIAL COUNTRY. IT IS NOT OF OUR OWN MAKING. IT WAS THRUST UPON US DURING THE PERIOD WHEN WE WERE UNDER COLONIAL RULE.+ -- MORE

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HOWEVER, HE SAID THE PEOPLE GOT REASONABLY WELL AND THIS WAS CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED WITH MALAYSIANS RESPECTING EACH OTHER'S RELIGIONS, CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS AS WELL AS BEING TOLERANT WITH ONE ANOTHER.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID DESPITE THESE POSITIVE POINTS, THERE WERE REPORTS THAT SOME RACES WERE BADLY TREATED IN MALAYSIA, THAT VERY SOON THERE WOULD BE RACIAL VIOLENCE AND OTHER SUCH NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS.

+THE FACT THAT THAT +VERY SOON+ SOON PASSES BY WITH NOTHING HAPPENING DOES NOT DETER THEM. SOON, THEY WILL REPORT AGAIN THAT VERY SOON THERE WILL BE RACIAL RIOTS IN MALAYSIA,+ HE ADDED.

SOME 400 PARLIAMENTARIANS ARE ATTENDING THE WEEK-LONG CONFERENCE. THIS IS THE THIRD TIME MALAYSIA IS HOSTING THE CPA CONFERENCE.

ALSO PRESENT AT THE CEREMONY WERE THE PRIME MINISTER'S WIFE, DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH AND PRESIDENT OF THE CPA, DATUK SHAHRIR SAMAD. -- BERNAMA  
1610MST 01 09 87