

APPLY SANCTIONS, C'WEALTH TOLD

'Help end apartheid'

By AHIRUDIN ATTAN

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad reiterated yesterday Malaysia's strong objection to apartheid rule in South Africa and urged the Commonwealth to apply compulsory total sanctions to end the minority rule.

He said the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Vancouver next month must resolve to apply the sanctions even if a member opposes such a move.

"We in Malaysia feel strongly that South Africa should be completely ostracised," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said at the opening of the 33rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) conference in Kuala Lumpur.

"Then and then only will the Commonwealth be meaningful. The few should not allow the many to suffer so much for filthy lucre," he said.

The lull of the gamelan, a Ma-

laysian traditional music, that accompanied Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir's arrival at the Parliament House, dissolved quickly as he set out on the offensive against apartheid and those who support it.

Obviously hitting out at the UK, the Prime Minister said one nation in the Commonwealth should not be allowed to hold back other members from acting against the crime of apartheid.

"The CPA must urge the doubting Margarets from among the heads of government attending the CHOGM in Vancouver to resolve to apply sanctions now," he told the 400 participants from various Commonwealth countries.

"The blacks are being oppressed, ill-treated and murdered. We are only prolonging their suffering by our half-measures. The only answer is total sanctions and isolation," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he is critical of the Commonwealth because often it failed to live up to its name. He, nevertheless, acknowledged the help the Commonwealth has been providing the poorer member countries, adding that this is why "we are still in the Commonwealth despite our other disappointments".

He described the CPA as "somewhat different", having succeeded so far in promoting friendship and understanding among the Commonwealth countries. In this respect, he said, the CPA, itself a multi-national body, must support multi-lateralism.

Of late, he said, there is a tendency to ignore the United Nation's multi-lateralism policy in favour of bilateralism or limited small groups.

It is all right if the discussions of these small groups do not affect other countries but in many instances the resolutions they

adopted harm a lot of other countries.

Citing an example, he said, it is the meeting of the Group of Seven which has suddenly made poor countries poorer.

"The exchange rates of different currencies have been manipulated so that suddenly poor countries find their external debts doubled and their export earnings reduced."

He added that when rich countries get together to rearrange the financial and economic affairs of the world to their advantage, poor countries cannot but be the losers.

"We must return to multi-lateralism. The CPA must support multi-lateralism as exemplified by the United Nations."

Among those present at the opening were CPA president Datuk Shahrir Abdul Samad, Commonwealth secretary-general Sir Shridath Ramphal and CPA vice president Senator Kerry W. Sibraa.