

MAHATHIR: IMPOSE SANCTIONS ANYWAY

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Commonwealth leaders meeting in Vancouver next month must resolve to impose full sanctions against South Africa immediately even though one member is against such a move, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"We must think of something to do. There is only one member who is not willing (to apply full sanctions)," he said in an apparent reference to Britain.

"If we fail to change that we should not be held back but should ahead," he added when opening the conference at Parliament House.

He asked the 180 conference delegates to help ensure that "doubting Margarets" among the heads of government attending the the Vancouver summit also resolve to apply full sanctions. "Then and only then will the Commonwealth be meaningful," he said.

He said the excuse that sanctions would hurt the blacks more than the whites had proven to be untrue.

"The blacks are being oppressed, ill-treated and

murdered even without sanctions. We are only prolonging their sufferings by our half-measures," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he did not raise the issue with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher when he visited Britain recently because "I knew her stand."

He said Malaysia had been "unequivocal in its abhorrence and condemnation of the racist white regime in South Africa."

"It was Malaysia which initiated the expulsion of South Africa from the Commonwealth. And as early as 1965, Malaysia applied sanctions against South Africa," he added.

He said he would raise the matter again if he attends the meeting in Vancouver.

He told the delegates that he was on record as being critical of the Commonwealth — "and I still am."

"I criticised the Commonwealth because far too often it did not live up to its name," he said.

"There is nothing common about the wealth of the Commonwealth. Thus the

rich among us frequently refuse even to understand the problems faced by the poor — even when the problem is of their making."

He said the poor countries which struggled to deal with these problems are "belaboured with carping criticisms for not being democratic enough."

"But I am not completely right of course. My officers often remind me of the help we and other poor countries receive. There is the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, the Commonwealth Foundation ... that is why we are still in the Commonwealth despite our other disappointments," he said.

Later Dr Mahathir told reporters: "We made a study recently and the Government decided to stay in the Commonwealth."

He said the CPA was "somewhat different" from the Commonwealth.

He said the CPA was "of the Commonwealth, but it serves the useful purpose of spreading the role and practice of Parliament in a parliamentary democracy."