

0173

U E232 AAE

SUMMIT- MAHATHIR

FROM ZAINOOR SULAIMAN

MANILA, DEC 14 (BERNAMA) -- ASEAN MEMBER COUNTRIES SHOULD REMOVE ALL +UNNECESSARY BARRIERS+ IN THEIR PURSUIT OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION TO TURN THE REGION INTO A POWER HOUSE OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT. PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

+WE MUST HAVE THE POLITICAL WILL,+ HE TOLD HIS COUNTERPARTS AT THE OPENING OF THE THIRD SUMMIT OF ASEAN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT HERE.

+FOR AS LONG AS WE ARE CLEAR ABOUT THOSE OBJECTIVES, OUR WILL SHOULD NOT WANE,+ HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS ATTENDING THE SUMMIT FOR THE FIRST TIME, SAID ASEAN HAD COMBINED POTENTIAL OF MORE THAN 250 MILLION PEOPLE WHOSE CREATIVITY AND INNOVATIVE ABILITY WERE CONSIDERABLE.

+THE ASEAN COUNTRIES HAVE THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY TO VENTURE INTO MANY AREAS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN ORDER TO REALISE THE REGION'S FULL POTENTIAL AND TRULY TURN ASEAN INTO A GROWTH CENTRE FOR THE FUTURE,+ HE SAID.

NOTING THAT THE ECONOMIC CHALLENGES BEING FACED BY ASEAN WERE ENORMOUS, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID ASEAN HAD BEEN HIGHLY DEPENDENT ON THE WORLD MARKET FOR THE SALE OF PRIMARY COMMODITIES AND A LIMITED RANGE OF MANUFACTURED GOODS.

HE SAID THAT SINCE THE 1970S THERE HAD BEEN A RELATIVELY SMALL THOUGH STEADY INCREASE IN INTRA-ASEAN TRADE;

+THE PROLONGED IMBALANCES IN WORLD TRADE AND INCREASED PROTECTIONIST TRENDS WHICH ARE BECOMING PERSVASIVE IN THE INTERNATIONAL TRADING ENVIRONMENT DO NOT BODE WELL FOR ASEAN,+ HE SAID. -- MORE

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SUMMIT-MAHATHIR 2 MANILA

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE COMMODITY PRODUCING COUNTRIES IN ASEAN HAD SUFFERED THE ILL-EFFECTS OF POOR DEMAND, LOW RETURNS AND INCREASING PROTECTIONISM IN THE AREA OF COMMODITIES.

+WE FACE DANGEROUS TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IN THE FORM OF SUBSIDISED AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS, CONCESSIONAL SALES AND SMEAR CAMPAIGNS TO DISCREDIT OUR PRODUCTS,+ HE SAID.

SAYING THAT ASEAN SHOULD INCREASE ITS EFFORTS IN SAFEGUARDING ITS LONG-TERM INTERESTS IN THE AREA OF COMMODITIES, THE PRIME MINISTER STRESSED THE URGENT NEED FOR ASEAN TO GIVE SPECIAL EMPHASIS TO THE COMMODITY ISSUES.

HE SUGGESTED THE REVIEWING AND RESTRUCTURING OF THE ASEAN MACHINERY TO ACCOMMODATE THE COMMODITY SECTOR.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID ASEAN, AS A RESPECTED REGIONAL ORGANISATION, SHOULD BE CAPABLE OF CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS FINDING SOME OF THE SOLUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC WOES THROUGH THE INTENSIFICATION OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION AMONG MEMBER COUNTRIES, DIALOGUES WITH DIALOGUE PARTNERS AND THROUGH ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL FORA.

+ASEAN COUNTRIES CAN COLLECTIVELY VENTURE INTO VARIOUS AREAS IN ORDER TO HELP THEMSELVES AS WELL AS TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS A MORE STABLE AND MANAGEABLE WORLD ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT ,+ HE SAID.

INCREASED COOPERATION AMONG THE COUNTRIES IN THE SOUTH COULD PROVIDE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR ASEAN, HE ADDED. -- MORE

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SUMMIT-MAHATHIR 3 MANILA

HITTING OUT AT THE CRITICS, DATUK SERI OR MAHATHIR SAID THAT WHILE CERTAIN SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES OF ASEAN COOPERATION MIGHT HAVE RUN INTO SOME PROBLEMS, ASEAN HAS SUCCEEDED IN MANY AREAS.

ASEAN FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION, WHICH ENCOMPASSED A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES, HAD INDEED ENHANCED THE ASEAN IDENTITY, HE SAID.

+ASEAN SHOULD ALWAYS BE WILLING TO IMPROVE, ACCEPT NEW IDEAS AND BEGIN FRESH INITIATIVES TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF COOPERATION NOT ONLY AMONG THE MEMBER COUNTRIES BUT ALSO BETWEEN ASEAN AND THE REST OF THE WORLD,+ HE SAID.

THE CURRENT SUMMIT GAVE THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASSESS ASEAN'S ACHIEVEMENTS AND LOOK INTO NEW INITIATIVES THAT HAD BEEN CAREFULLY WORKED OUT OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS, HE SAID.

+ I AM CONFIDENT THAT ALL OF US SHARE THE VIEW THAT ASEAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION NEEDS TO BE INTENSIFIED,+ HE SAID, CALLING HIS COUNTERPARTS FROM THE OTHER FIVE MEMBER NATIONS TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE.

ACCORDING TO DATUK SERI OR MAHATHIR, ONE AREA THAT COULD BE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED WAS THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF WIDE PARTICIPATION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN THE ACTIVITIES OF ASEAN. -- MORE  
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D185

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SUMMIT-MAHATHIR 4 MANILA

ON POLITICAL ISSUES, DATUK SERI OR MAHATHIR SAID THAT AMONG THE MANY CHANGES THE COUNTRIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA FACED IN THE LAST DECADE WAS THE PROLONGED VIETNAMESE OCCUPATION OF KAMPUCHEA.

THERE HAD ALSO BEEN A NEW CORRELATION IN THE STRATEGY INTEREST AND MILITARY PRESENCE OF THE SUPERPOWERS IN THE REGION.

+THESE HAVE PRESENTED AN UNFAVOURABLE SITUATION FOR PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE REGION,+ HE SAID.

ON THE KAMPUCHEAN PROBLEM, HE SAID EFFORTS TO FIND A SOLUTION SHOULD NOT AIM ONLY AT ENSURING TOTAL VIETNAMESE WITHDRAWAL AND THE RESTORATION OF THE INDEPENDENT, NEUTRAL AND NON-ALIGNED STATUS OF KAMPUCHEA, BUT ALSO AT ENDING ONCE AND FOR ALL THE RIVALRY AMONG MAJOR POWERS IN THE REGION SO THAT DURABLE PEACE, UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION COULD PREVAIL.

+LET SOUTHEAST ASIA BE FOR SOUTHEAST ASIANS AND LET THE PEOPLE OF THIS REGION GET ON WITH THE JOB ON MAINTAINING PEACE AND STABILITY FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR OWN DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT IN THE LIGHT OF THESE CHANGES, IT WAS IMPERATIVE THAT FURTHER EFFORTS BE MADE TO EFFECT THE EARLY REALISATION OF THE ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY (ZOPFAN) IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

STRESSING THAT MALAYSIA PLACED GREAT IMPORTANCE ON ZOPFAN, HE SAID IT RECOGNISED THE ROLES OF THE MAJOR POWERS, THEIR LEGITIMATE INTERESTS AND POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE REGION. -- MORE  
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SUMMIT-MAHATHIR 5 MANILA

DATUKSERIDR MPHATHIR SAIDASEAN HAD BEEN QUITE SUCCESSFUL IN FACING THE SECURITY CHALLENGES POSED BY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE REGION.

+OUR FAITH IN THE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL PROGRESS AS THE FOUNDATION FOR PEACE AND SECURITY HAS PAID OFF,+ HE SAID.

+CONSEQUENTLY WE REJECT THE POSSIBILITY OF ASEAN EVOLVING INTO A REGIONAL COLLECTIVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENT OR MILITARY ALLIANCE.

+WE ARE ABLE TO DO THIS BECAUSE WE BELIEF THAT TO WIN FRIENDS ONE SHOULD NOT CREATE ENEMIES,+ HE ADDED.

DATUKSERI OR MAHATHIR ALSO SPOKE ON THE PROBLEM OF DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING WHICH WAS AFFECTING THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF MEMBER COUNTRIES.

CALLING FOR GREATER AND CONCERTED EFFORTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO ERADICATE THE PROBLEM, HE SAID ASEAN'S RESOLVE ON THIS MATTER HAD BEEN AN EXAMPLE TO ALL COUNTRIES COUNTERING +THIS TERRIBLE SCOURGE.+

+WE MUST REMAIN STEADFAST IN THE FIGHT AGAINST&THE DRUG MENACE,+ HE SAID.

ON THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEE PROBLEM FACED BY ASEAN COUNTRIES FOR OVER A DECADE, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID EFFORTS SHOULD CONTINUE TO FIND A DURABLE AND EFFECTIVE SOLUTION, IN PARTICULAR BY SOLVING IT AT SOURCE.

VIETNAM AND LAOS SHOULD COOPERATE IN THIS REGARD, HE ADDED. --

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