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'SUMMIT-MAHATHIR
FROM KUAHGUANOO

MANILA, DEC 15 (BERNAMA) -- THE MANILA' DECLARATION OF 1987 IS AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE IN THE PROGRESS OF ASEAN, MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

+IT IS A SYNTHESIS OF THOUGHTS, IDEAS AND VISIONS, A FAIR AND FRANK ASSESSMENT OF ASEAN'S ACHIEVEMENTS AND SHORTCOMINGS, AND A GUIDE FOR A REALISTIC APPROACH TOWARDS ASEAN COOPERATION,+ HE SAID AT THE CLOSING OF THE THIRD ASEAN SUMMIT HERE.

HE SAID THAT THE DECLARATION REAFFIRMED THE ASEAN LEADERS' COMMITMENT TO THE OBJECTIVE OF ASEAN AND STATED OPENLY WHAT THEY WANTED FOR THE FUTURE OF ASEAN.

IT WAS A +TESTIMONY TO THE CONTINUED COMMITMENT OF THE MEMBER STATES TO ASEAN,+ HE SAID.

THE FOCUS OF THE TWO-DAY SUMMIT HAD MOST APPROPRIATELY BEEN ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION, HE SAID, AND ADDED THAT THE SIGNING OF THE FOUR AGREEMENTS AND MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING WAS A SIGNIFICANT INDICATOR OF ASEAN'S SERIOUSNESS IN DEVELOPING ON-GOING PROGRAMMES IN ECONOMIC COOPERATION.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID ASEAN'S GOOD STANDING IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY +IS BEYOND DOUBT.+

+TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, ASEAN IS A REALITY. TO US IN THE REGION, IT IS BOTH A REALITY AND A STATE OF MIND,+ HE SAID. -- MORE

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TOUCHING ON THEIR TALKS WHICH COVERED +A WIDE AREA+, HE SAID THIS HAD BEEN NECESSITATED BY MANY RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA WHICH +ARE INEXTRICABLY LINKED TO OUR HOPES AND FEARS, OUR EXPECTATIONS AND OUR VISION OF THE FUTURE.+

+THE ASEAN MEMBER COUNTRIES CANNOT BE EFFECTIVELY INSULATED FROM THESE DEVELOPMENTS NOR CAN WE ISOLATE OURSELVES IN THE LIGHT OF INCREASING INTERDEPENDENCE,+ DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO HAD OPENLY STATED ABOUT SEVEN YEARS AGO THAT ASEAN WAS THE FIRST CORNERSTONE OF HIS FOREIGN POLICY AND RELATIONS? SAID.

HE SAID THE INCREASING STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE CONTINUING TURMOIL IN INDOCHINA MADE IT MORE RELEVANT FOR THE REGION TO SPEED UP DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS AND TO MAINTAIN PEACE AND STABILITY.

+ASEAN'S COMMITMENT TO ACHIEVING THE EARLY REALISATION OF ZOPFAN (ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY) AS CONTAINED IN THE ASEAN DECLARATION OF KUALA LUMPUR IN 1971) SHOULD BE TRANSLATED INTO POSITIVE ACTION, PARTICULARLY NOW THAT THE SUPERPOWERS THEMSELVES HAVE COME TO A NEW AND POSITIVE PHASE IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO PAID TRIBUTE TO PRESIDENT AQUINO AND HER GOVERNMENT FOR HOSTING THE SUMMIT. +YOU HAVE SHOWN US THAT THE FIRST WOMAN PRESIDENT IN ASEAN IS A PERSON OF GREAT CALIBRE AND CHARM.+ -- MORE

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SUMMIT-MAHATHIR 3 MANILA

SULTAN HASANAL BOLKIAH, WHOSE OIL-RICH SULTANATE JOINED THE NON-COMMUNIST SOUTHEAST ASIAN GROUPING IN 1984, SAID BRUNEI DARUSSALAM WOULD BE +PLEASED+ TO PLAY AN ACTIVE PART IN THE LAUNCHING OF 4 PROGRAMME ON THE EXCHANGE OF YOUTH WITHIN THE GROUPING.

+WE ARE VERY HAPPY WITH THE VARIOUS AGREEMENTS REACHED AT THIS HISTORIC MEETING,+ HE SAID, NOTING IN PARTICULAR THE PART ON FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION COVERING SOCIAL, CULTURAL, NON-POLITICAL AND NON-ECONOMIC MATTERS.

PRESIDENT SUHARTO SAID HE WELCOMED THE COOPERATION IN THE POLITICAL FIELD WHICH +IS 4 FORWARD STEP AND QUITE ENCOURAGING+.

+THIS COULD BE ACHIEVED ONLY AFTER WE WERE ABLE TO HARMONISE THE STAND AND VIEWS OF THE RESPECTIVE ASEAN MEMBER STATES WITH REGARD TO POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE WORLD SITUATION IN GENERAL,+ HE SAID.

PRESIDENT SUHARTO SAID THEY WERE FOCUSING ON OTHER FIELDS OF COOPERATION AFTER 20 YEARS OF ASEAN'S ESTABLISHMENT +BECAUSE THEY PROVED TO HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO BE DEVELOPED EVEN FURTHER.+ -- MORE
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SUMMIT-MAHATHIR 4 MANILA

ENCIK LEE, IN 4 BRIEF REMARK, SINGLED OUT THE ASEAN SECRETARIAT AND OFFICIALS FOR THANKS.

+FOR NEARLY ONE-AND-A-HALF YEARS THEY HAVE WORKED TO PREPARE FOR THE SUMMIT,+ HE SAID.

GEN PREM TINSULANONDA, WHO DESCRIBED THE SUMMIT AS 4 +FAMILY GATHERING+, SAID THAT WHILE THE DECISIONS CONTAINED IN THE DECLARATION MIGHT APPEAR MODEST, +THEY ARE PRAGMATIC AND WILL DEEPEN AND BROADEN ASEAN COOPERATION, PARTICULARLY IN THE ECONOMIC AREA.+

HE SAID THE GROUPING WOULD CONTINUE WITH ITS EFFORTS OF 'INFLUENCING THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT TO MAKE IT MORE CONDUCIVE TO THE PROMOTION OF ASEAN'S INTERESTS.

HE SAID THAT TO HIM, THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE SUMMIT WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING, +FOR IT IS 4 NEW CHAPTER IN THE ASEAN EXPERIENCE.+

PRESIDENT AQUINO SAID IT WAS IN THE SPIRIT OF ASEAN THAT THE OTHER LEADERS HAD DECIDED +TO BRAVE THE RISKS AND SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH THE PHILIPPINES,+ REFERRING TO ENCIK LEE'S REMARK YESTERDAY THAT HE HAD OVERRULED HIS SECURITY ADVISERS NOT TO ATTEND THE SUMMIT AND THAT OF PRESIDENT SUHARTO'S RESOLVE TO SHOW SUPPORT FOR 'THE PHILIPPINES.

+NO GREATER LOVE, INDEED, HAS 4 MAN THAN TO LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR 4 FRIEND,+ PRESIDENT AQUINO, WHO IS NOW SERVING 22 MONTHS IN OFFICE, SAID. -- BERNAMA

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