

0709

BE448 A A E

MAHATHSR-COMMODITIES RRR
FROM AZMAN UJANG

MANILA, DEC 15 (BERNAMA) -- AN ADDITIONAL ASEAN COMMITTEE -- ON COMMODITIES -- PROPOSED BY MALAYSIA TO TACKLE PROBLEMS FACED BY THE REGION'S COMMODITY PRODUCERS IS BEING WORKED OUT BY OFFICIALS OF THE SIX MEMBER COUNTRIES.

PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD WHO TOLD THIS TO MALAYSIAN JOURNALISTS HERE TODAY SAID THE COMMITTEE WAS ESPECIALLY NEEDED NOW GIVEN THE COMMON THREAT OF THE ANTI-PALM OIL CAMPAIGN IN THE UNITED STATES.

ASEAN HAS ALREADY A TOTAL OF 15 COMMITTEES COVERING VARIOUS MATTERS, INCLUDING FIVE ON ECONOMIC MATTERS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO HAD ATTENDED THE JUST-CONCLUDED THIRD ASEAN SUMMIT, SAID THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST PALM OIL WAS DIRECTED NOT ONLY AT MALAYSIA, THE WORLD'S BIGGEST PALM OIL PRODUCER, BUT ALSO INDONESIA.

+IT WILL DO US A LOT OF GOOD IF WE CAN COOPERATE WITH EACH OTHER AND PRESENT A UNITED FRONT,+ HE SAID. -- MORE
1727MST 15 12 87

0710

B E449 AAE

MAHATHIR-COMMODITY 2 MANILA

IN THE CASE OF TIN, HE SAID, ASEAN PRODUCERS LIKE MALAYSIA, INDONESIA AND THAILAND HAD BEEN ABLE TO COOPERATE THROUGH THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN THE ASSOCIATION OF TIN-PRODUCING COUNTRIES (ATPC).

+THE RESULT OF THIS COOPERATION IS THAT TIN CAN NOW BE SOLD,+ HE SAID, ALLUDING TO THE GRADUAL RECOVERY OF TIN PRICES FOLLOWING THE COLLAPSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL TIN MARKET IN THE LAST FEW YEARS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO SAID THE REASON WHY THE GROUPING'S POLITICAL RESULTS +OUTPERFORMED+ ITS ECONOMIC RESULTS WAS BECAUSE ASEAN WAS FORMED AS A POLITICAL FORUM.

HE SAID THAT UNLIKE THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (EEC), ASEAN WAS FORMED NOT BECAUSE OF A PLANNED POLITICAL DESIRE TO COOPERATE ECONOMICALLY.

+THE ECONOMIC IDEAS ONLY CAME LATER. I AM AFRAID THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE, WHEN THEY TALK OF ASEAN, HAVE THE EEC IN MIND. SIMPLY BECAUSE THE EEC COOPERATES ECONOMICALLY DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE WILL COOPERATE ALONG THE SAME LINES,+ HE SAID, AND ADDED THAT ASEAN COUNTRIES HAD COMPETING ECONOMIES.

BUT HE SAID THAT ASEAN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AT THEIR SUMMIT HAD SHOWN CLEAR POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO MOVE INTRA-REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION FORWARD AND IT WAS NOW UP TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND OFFICIALS IN THE COUNTRIES TO TRANSLATE THEIR RESOLVE. -- BERNAMA
1730MST 15 12 87