

# PM urges greater commitment to UN

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From AHMAD A. TALIB

UNITED NATIONS (New York), Wed. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad called for renewed commitment to the United Nations because the world body can serve better when it is functioning at its best.

The Prime Minister said the time for UN bashing and the assault on multilateralism is over.

"If universal responsibility is a creed that this and future generations can believe in, then every country must provide full commitment to the United Nations," he said in his address to the 43rd General Assembly today.

He also said that a revitalised United Nations poised to assume even greater responsibilities must not be hampered by a lack of financial resources.

## Common appeal

*A sine qua non* for its very survival is the timely payment by member countries of their assessed contributions.

"Malaysia would like to believe that at long last the UN is coming into its own and fulfilling the tasks of moving conflicts from the battlefields to the conference table.

"Malaysia's faith and confidence in the UN has never wavered but we were saddened to see in the past the struggle of the UN to retain its relevance and credibility."

He said multilateralism had become a bad word as the

powerful nations resorted to solving problems on their own.

"We are therefore pleased to welcome this change, this renewal of faith in the UN which we hope would mean the birth of a new era in multilateralism."

"When one extols the achievements of the UN, one is not refusing to recognise that the steady improvement of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union has helped significantly in bringing about progress on conflict resolutions.

"All of us who have lived under periods of unease and uncertainty, when the two powers stared at each other eyeball-to-eyeball, are greatly relieved that these two superpowers are realistically discussing peace and construction between them.

"They can make an enormous contribution to the realisation of the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

"It is our common appeal to both these countries that they seek recourse through all the institutions of the UN when attempting to defuse conflicts and in realising a more equitable world order."

But the UN has not been allowed to play its proper role in the search for a settlement in the Middle East which is still embroiled in an endless cycle of violence.

"This is due primarily to Israel's intransigence. Israel is

single-minded in the execution of its policies of aggression and expansion and brutal subjugation of the Palestinian people."

On apartheid, the Prime Minister said the only response of good men to this crime against humanity and an affront to the universal conscience must be to seek the total destruction of this system.

"It is a delusion of anyone to believe that we can effect an evolution of the system into something more human and humane. The hideous manifestations of apartheid are seen daily in the atrocities inflicted on black South Africans."

## Realistic action

Dr Mahathir also spoke on the Kampuchean problem, the hasty exploitation of resources in Antarctica, world disarmament, the work of the South Commission towards greater collaboration among developing countries, and drug abuse and illegal trafficking.

The Prime Minister also gave his views on economic problems troubling the world, saying that the issues may appear stale but "this does not make it less relevant, nor less urgent".

On the contrary, the resolution of these economic problems, such as the establishment of a fairer and more favourable international trad-

ing environment, a re-examination of the role and functions of the multilateral financial institutions, a review and realignment of the international exchange rate regime and a resolution of the international debt problem would be positive beginnings of the UN's work programme in the economic area, he said.

Malaysia attaches great importance to the Uruguay Round of the multilateral trade negotiations. It is also concerned about the opposing trend of increasing integration which brings about greater exclusion.

"It is our hope therefore that the intentions of the European Economic Community to achieve an integrated internal market by 1992 do not obstruct efforts under UN auspices aimed at greater trade liberalisation."

Aside from restraints on protectionist tendencies, the world's trading nations must also agree on a more realistic and broad-based action on their currency realignment.

"Agreements confined only to an exclusive group have proven disastrous to the poorer nations whose currencies and small trade advantages have been seriously affected.

"The interests of the smaller nations are best served by their representation at such gatherings when issues which affect them are taken up," the Prime Minister added.