

DR M WANTS MORE ACTION

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MALAYSIA has called for more sanctions against the South African regime, and wanted more definite steps to resolve long-standing issues such as the debt problem of the poor.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, opening the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, observed, the niceties but kept his message unfettered.

"Sanctions work," the Prime Minister said, and asked the leaders not to be deluded into thinking that the "small changes" they now saw in South Africa was due to a sudden flowering of humanitarian feelings.

He was understood to be alluding to the release of eight anti-apartheid activists in South Africa recently, a move which black leaders said was timed to influence discussions at the summit.

In an apparent reference to the reason Britain had given for not backing economic measures against Pretoria, he said: "Concern for the effect of sanctions on the blacks is misplaced. Consequently, sanctions must not only continue but must be escalated.

"Investments and financial flows to racist

South Africa must be completely stopped."

In his 20-minute speech, Dr Mahathir set the tone for discussion on the South African question and a myriad of global issues, ranging from superpower detente to the environment, from the Middle East situation to the drug problem, and from the troubles in Cambodia to manipulation of currencies.

Dr Mahathir said the current trends and circumstances in international political fields presented challenges and opportunities.

And if it was to remain relevant, the Commonwealth "must provide some of the answers" he said before going through the issues one by one.

His assertion of Malaysia's stand against apartheid was well received by most of the delegates.

Since all member nations wanted to see apartheid eliminated, he said, "the correct signal must be sent to the racist regime in South Africa."

He added that the inde-

pendence plan for Namibia partly resulted from sanctions.

"We also know that control over Namibia will be grudgingly surrendered, and every opportunity exploited to frustrate the implementation of the plan," he said.

Dr Mahathir reminded the delegates of the Commonwealth's principal objective — the establishment of a democratic, truly non-racial, unitary and representative government in South Africa.

"We must not think of settling old scores. Whites, blacks and coloureds must live together in amity," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that developments in relations between the superpowers promised, for the first time since World War Two a "broad-based and unprecedented agenda for political and economic co-operation."

He said that although there was momentum towards detente, the other nations could not assume that their interests would not be sacrificed as the

superpowers resolved their differences.

"We must be mindful of this. We must be able to forecast and to pre-empt. Peace will carry a cost. That cost must be equitably shared," he added.

On the Middle East, Dr Mahathir expressed the hope that the current ceasefire arrangements would lead to an end to the conflict.

He criticised Israel for practising "state terrorism" in the name of security which, he said, continued to deprive the Palestinians of their homeland.

"State terrorism as practised by Israel is as despicable as any kind of terrorism and must be stopped. There cannot be peace and security without justice," he said.

Dr Mahathir, turning to the Cambodian problem, called for further efforts towards a comprehensive

political settlement "before the situation degenerated into another bloody civil war."

He also welcomed back Pakistan to the Commonwealth, saying that the presence of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto here was a "sort of homecoming."

He also thanked Queen Elizabeth, who is head of the Commonwealth, for her state visit to Malaysia just before the conference.

"She has won the hearts of everyone of us by her friendliness and charm," he said.

Her presence in Malaysia, he added, made the Commonwealth more cohesive and meaningful.

There was long applause when Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia, at one time disenchanted with the body of 49 nations, had rediscovered the Commonwealth.