

# Statement

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## remains

## valid: Dr M

**KUALA LUMPUR, Tues.** — The Kuala Lumpur Statement on South Africa remains a valid and official Commonwealth consensus despite Britain's reservations on certain provisions in the document, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad paid today.

He said the statement was a manifestation of the unity of Commonwealth member states.

"The Kuala Lumpur Statement on South Africa is another significant initiative by the Commonwealth in its continuing effort to pressure the Pretoria regime to negotiate, commit itself to fundamental reforms, involving the dismantling of the apartheid system and the acceptance of majority rule," he told a Press conference at the close of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting this afternoon.

Dr Mahathir stayed clear of any criticism of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher for her controversial statement on South Africa.

However, when asked to comment on Mrs Thatcher's stand, he said it was unfortunate that "there should be a desire on the part of Britain to disassociate itself from the opinion of the rest".

Pressed further on the point, he said: "I believe that normally when we are marching, if everyone puts out his left foot and you put out your right . . . that will be out of step."

He described the meeting as eventful and fruitful, during which a great deal

of ground was covered and the discussions were interesting, stimulating and informative.

He said the leaders agreed on common positions on a number of international and regional issues which would be the Commonwealth's contribution towards world peace and co-operation.

"As chairman, I believe that the Commonwealth has reason to look ahead with renewed confidence because of what has been achieved in Kuala Lumpur."

### Satisfied

On the Langkawi Declaration, which is a Malaysian initiative, Dr Mahathir said it would make an important contribution in giving a balanced perspective to the global debate on the environment.

He said its comprehensive programme of action provided a sound basis for international co-operation on the issue.

Replying to a question, Dr Mahathir said he was satisfied with the wording of the declaration, although it might appear to be a "watered-down" version of the strong stand he made on the environment in his opening address.

The declaration, he added, pointed out that there should be a balanced perspective of the environmental problem.

He said in a conference of so many people, "everyone has to water down his ideas and feelings".

"We have to accommodate

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## Main issues receive equal attention

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date everyone . . . so the end result seems to be a watering down. But this does not prevent us from pushing our line in some other forum.

On whether he was disappointed that much attention was diverted to the issue of South Africa instead of the environment, he said it was only right for the meeting to give equal amount of time to both issues.

"The unfortunate thing, of course, is that people were more interested in South Africa and kept harping on it . . . they do not seem to give the same kind of attention to the declaration on the environment."

### Initiative

To another question, he said the debates on South Africa and the environment could not be described as "talking shop".

Dr Mahathir said the debates showed the seriousness with which the heads of Government considered South Africa and the environment.

He said the Commonwealth

was an organisation which was interested in international issues and was quite influential in effecting measures.

"It is no longer a sort of genteel association for people who speak English."

Elaborating on the communiqué, Dr Mahathir said the leaders had also endorsed another Malaysian initiative — the Commonwealth Consultative Group of Technology Management (CCGTM), which was a new and innovative approach to promote practical co-operation in the Commonwealth.

Malaysia, he said, would contribute US\$50,000 (about \$135,000) a year for five years to the CCGTM.

Malaysia would also contribute £50,000 (about \$215,000) to the special fund for Mozambique.

Also present at the Press conference were outgoing Commonwealth Secretary-General Sir Shridath Ramphal, Foreign Minister Datuk Abu Hassan Omar and the Foreign Ministry's secretary-general Datuk Ahmad Kamil Jaafar.