

Communique stresses the need
for -close-knit Commonwealth

Grouping is still united, say leaders



KUALA LUMPUR, Tues.
— The 27th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) ended today with the 49 nations declaring that the grouping remained fundamentally united despite the sharp dispute over South Africa.

The meeting, described by Secretary-General Sir Shridath Ramphal as "one of the best ever summits," in its communique stressed the need for the Commonwealth to forge a close-knit grouping.

Towards this end a high-level group, headed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, was set up to review the role of the Commonwealth in the 1990s and beyond.

The leaders wound up their week-long summit by complimenting host Malaysia for "the excellent hospitality and well-organised summit". British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said Dr Mahathir was a good chairman.

Dr Mahathir later told a Press conference: "My appreciation to all those who have made this CHOGM such a success — the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Malaysian CHOGM secretariat staff, the police and security personnel who have so diligently kept us safe, hundreds of PWTC staff and the Malaysian public who have been tolerating the traffic jams and inconveniences.

Despite the acrimonious exchanges during the summit, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney said the dispute "does not affect the Commonwealth one iota".

New Zealand Prime Minister Geoffrey Palmer said the Commonwealth had emerged unharmed. "The Commonwealth is big enough to stand disagreements," he told a news conference. He said the organisation could operate "without the wholehearted agreement of Britain."

"I think it has reached a point of maturity when it can proceed without the wholehearted support of Britain and it does not feel inhibited in doing so.

"But to put the matter in perspective, the number of contentious matters on which we had been able to agree on were far more numerous than those we disagreed on."

The Commonwealth, which encompasses one-fourth of the world's population, will hold its next summit in Zimbabwe, which, as Britain's last African colony obtained independence in 1981.

The summit adopted a 29-page communique covering a wide range of issues on the international, political, economic and social scene.

The communique acknowledged the Langkawi Declaration on the environment and the Kuala Lumpur Statement on Southern Africa..

It expressed its deep appreciation to the excellent arrangements made for the meeting and the warm welcome and generous hospitality of the Government and people of Malaysia.

The heads of Government also accepted Zimbabwe's offer to host the next CHOGM in Harare in 1991.

Pakistan's return to the Commonwealth was also acknowledged as an auspicious development which would enrich discussions and strengthen the Commonwealth's collective action.

On global trends, the communique welcomed the improved international political environment and the opportunity it provided for strengthening the trend towards achieving security through co-

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Focus on peace, development

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operation.

The leaders were encouraged that the Cold War and other confrontations were giving way to pragmatic negotiations and **were** hopeful that such an atmosphere of developing **en-**tente, a growing sense of trust between nations would foster creative international policies focusing on peace and development.

On regional matters, the heads of Government welcomed the various **initia-**tives, including those of the

Asean countries, to promote the peace process in Cambodia and to encourage dialogue among the contending parties.

They felt that a just and durable peace in Cambodia and stability in the region could only be achieved through a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodian problem.

On the problem of the Vietnamese boat people, the leaders called on all resettlement countries to **ful-**fil their commitment to resettle the boat people who were "genuine refugees"

and to increase their **off-**take in order to cope with the increase in flow.

On countering drug abuse and trafficking, the leaders acknowledged that the problem was escalating at an alarming rate, and towards this end felt the Commonwealth should take the lead in promoting more effective national and international action on a number of key fronts.

On the world economic situation, the leaders **re-**cognised the need to control inflation in the industrial countries but felt that

efforts should be made to avoid the recurrence of a recession.

They stressed the importance of close policy co-ordination **among major** countries with the appropriate mix of **fiscal** and monetary policies, keeping in view the impact of developed countries' policies on developing countries.

The leaders also **empha-**sised the importance of an open and non-discriminatory multi-lateral trading system for sustaining non-inflationary world growth.