

KL offers; technical, managerial help

MALAYSIA is prepared to offer technical and managerial assistance to a number of developing member countries of the Commonwealth. The level of development in the country surprised many leaders attending the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

In bilateral discussions that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad held during the meeting, a number of leaders were keen to seek assistance from Malaysia in a number of areas.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir told the Malaysian journalists he had bilateral discussions with Mr Bob Hawke of Australia, Mr Brian Mulroney of Canada, Mr Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, King Moshoeshoe II of Lesotho, Ghana and

several other island states including Kiribati, St Lucia, Botswana and Western Samoa.

President Mugabe had shown interest in the Felda schemes and had visited one of them. Ghana is keen to study the Malaysian cocoa industry which is more cost effective than that in Ghana.

During the bilateral meetings, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he stressed the importance of managerial skills in development of the economies. It was pointed out that even though there may be solid gold waiting to be mined, if it cannot be managed, then it will not yield the desirable results.

Malaysia's emphasis on managerial skills was pointed out to the readers and they were told that one university is 100 per cent devoted to training managers who

"are the key to industrial development and management of the economy".

He said that while previously he and other Malaysians spoke about the country's achievements, most people were sceptical. However, now that they have seen the developments and realised that Malaysia has achieved quite a lot, the Malaysian views will from now on be taken more seriously and appreciated better. The prime minister said that a number of leaders were surprised at what they saw of the country.

On environment, the prime minister said that despite the Langkawi Declaration on Environment, the issue will have to be kept alive. Malaysia's views "must be heard". He stressed the need to keep on "hammering* or

else the issue will be lost.

He took to task the environmental groups in Malaysia who appear to be "agents of the West". The prime minister said he told the conference that it was the developed world which was responsible for destruction and environmental degradation. But now the developing countries are being accused of cutting down their trees while the developed nations have cut their trees and reaped the benefits of cheap hydro power for their development earlier.

On economic issues, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said there is no doubt that the developed member countries listened to the views and concerns of the developing countries. In fact, Mr Brian Mulroney has said he will act as the spokesman for the developing

countries in the Group of Seven (G-7) meetings.

There are only two members of the G-7 in the Commonwealth — Canada and Britain. Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said while Mrs Margaret Thatcher did not say that she will be the snokesman for the developing countries, "I am quite sure that she will do the same".

On the regional Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, the heads of government agreed that it duplicated CHOGM and that the regional meetings are therefore not necessary. However, the funds and the assistance channelled through the regional association will now be channelled through the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC).