

Observer team report to be made public

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the report of the team from Commonwealth countries which will be here to observe the polls on Oct 20 and 21 will be made public.

The Prime Minister said the observers, whose arrival and number has not been confirmed, would submit a report to Commonwealth secretary-general Chief Emeka Anyaoku.

"If the Government is given a copy of this report, we will publicise it," he told a Press conference after a two-hour Umno Supreme Council meeting at the Putra World Trade Centre.

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malaysia last year agreed to establish missions to observe elections of member countries to reinforce democratic principles.

Malaysia was the first country to rally to this call. The Government officially

invited the Commonwealth Secretariat recently to arrange the visit of the observer mission.

Responding to a question, Dr Mahathir said the terms of reference for the team was to ensure that the general election was conducted in accordance with the laws and regulations of the country and that the Opposition would enjoy the same privileges as the ruling coalition.

"This means that if they are given the right to hold *ceramah*, the observers will have to determine if we are denying this right. If there are prohibitions on political parties, then, they must also apply to the ruling party.

"There must not be any discrimination between the Opposition and the ruling party."

Dr Mahathir said the observers were free to meet the Opposition parties and observe anything they

wished.

"They will be given the list of voters, the constituency maps ... any public document that they want to see," he added.

To a statement by DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang that the Commonwealth Secretariat should have been told in advance so that the observer team could be here from the day of the dissolution of Parliament, Dr Mahathir said the Government could not inform the secretariat any earlier than Oct 4.

"We cannot tell them much earlier because we were going to have a snap election. But we did tell the secretariat to prepare the team early so that when the dissolution is announced, they can be here."

Asked if he had been told by the secretariat about the date of arrival of the observer mission, the Prime Minister said he had left this matter to Wisma Putra.