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KUALA LUMPUR, May 6. (Bernama) -- Malaysia is against any move by the international community to lift sanctions against the Pretoria regime at this time, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia believed that the lifting of sanctions during the current transition period would undermine the progress made towards dismantling apartheid.

+Until more concrete actions are taken by the South African regime, Malaysia would continue to urge the international community to maintain economic and other sanctions,+ he said in his message in conjunction with the Eighth Senior Officials Meeting of the AFRICA Fund, which begins here tomorrow.

AFRICA -- Action for Resisting Invasion, Colonialism and Apartheid -- is a fund set up in 1986 to provide assistance for the frontline states to fight the Pretoria regime and to support the liberation movements of South Africa.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is presently holidaying in Europe, said any action by the international community to lift the sanctions should be conditional on the actual progress being achieved towards the dismantling of apartheid.

He said: +Promises to dismantle apartheid, by themselves, do not merit the lifting of sanctions. -- more

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+The new developments brought about by the continuous pressure from the international community on the Pretoria regime have raised the basic question whether this process would lead to negotiations that would transform South Africa into a truly non-racial democracy.

+It has also raised the question as to whether the end of the apartheid laws and the start of negotiations constitute a process towards irreversible change.+

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the international community should remain vigilant and continue to urge all parties in South Africa, particularly the Pretoria regime, to move forward on genuine negotiations for a non-racial and democratic South Africa.

He, however, noted that the atmosphere in South Africa was better today than it had been in past decades.

The Prime Minister also said that it was equally important for the liberation movements themselves to cooperate and work together.

+Black on black violence which has persisted must cease,+ he said, adding that Malaysia urged all anti-apartheid forces to rally together and end the violence.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also urged the international community to contribute to the AFRICA Fund so that the frontline states could prepare for nation-building in a post-apartheid era. -- more

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At a press briefing on the meeting at Wisma Putra, the Deputy Secretary-General II of the ministry, Datuk Ismail Budin, said the five-day meeting would discuss the future of the fund in the wake of recent developments in South Africa.

Recommendations from the Kuala Lumpur meeting would be submitted to the Non-Aligned Meeting of Foreign Ministers scheduled to be held in Accra, Ghana, in September for a final decision, he added.

Datuk Ismail said delegates from member countries -- Algeria, Argentina, Egypt, India, Nigeria, Peru, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malaysia. _@

It would also be attended by delegates from the frontline states, South African liberation movements, donor countries and international organisations.

So far, the Fund has collected US\$419 million in kind and US\$33 million in cash, of which 67 per cent and 90 per cent, respectively, have been distributed.

Malaysia contributed US\$7 million to the fund, including US\$2 million in kind, Datuk Ismail said.

During the meeting, the delegates would also have discussions with the Economic Planning Unit on various money-raising projects for the Fund, he added. -- Bernama

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