

KL satisfied with CHOGM outcome

From HARDEV KAUR: Harare, Oct 22

AT 23 OCT 1991

MALAYSIA is satisfied with the outcome of the just ended Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM). Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it enabled "us to voice our views and make them known".

Speaking to the Malaysian press at the end of the meeting, he said it provides an opportunity to present "our views on a number of issues of importance to Malaysia. These include those on human rights, democracy, the environment and the world economic situation".

Asked to comment on observations and comments of many delegates at the meeting that he (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir) is looked upon in the same light as the British Prime Minister John Major — the only difference being that Mr Major is considered as the spokesman for the developed members and Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir the spokesman for the de-

veloping members — the Prime Minister said:

"It is not important whether I am seen in this light. What is important is that we presented our views."

It is important to make the views of the developing members known. The standards adopted by the developed members on human rights and democracy, for example, are not applicable to the developing members. They have to evolve and the developing countries must be given time.

In addition, the cultural and economic situation in each of the member countries differ and these must be taken into account before the western standards are imposed on them.

The Prime Minister said the meeting also enabled him to hold a number of bilateral meetings with other heads of government that were in Harare for the meeting. Otherwise a lot of time would

be required to travel to these countries to meet them.

Bilateral meetings were held with several heads and these included Mr Major, New Zealand's James Brendan Bolger, Bangladesh's Begum Khaleda Zia, Australia's Bob Hawke, the Seychelles' Albert Rene, Cyprus' Dr George Vassiliou and Singapore's Goh Chok Tong.

The Prime Minister held a luncheon meeting with some leaders of the African and Caribbean states during which views on various issues were exchanged.

He explained that the High Level Appraisal Group (HLAG) which was set up in 1989 at the Kuala Lumpur meeting has been mandated to continue. The Commonwealth secretary-general will report to the group, which will now include President Robert Mugabe, chairman of the current CHOGM, and it will be left to the group, which Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir

will continue to chair on the follow-up decisions.

Asked on his trip to Tanzania, the Prime Minister said it was aimed at strengthening bilateral relations. A number of African countries are interested in Malaysia's development and the programmes it has adopted.

Undoubtedly, the visit by the country's number one salesman will provide an opportunity to explore possibilities of expanding trade and investment by the business communities of both countries.

Later, President Mugabe, as chairman of the meeting told a news conference that the meeting was "a tremendous success" even though it was "long and wide in agenda" and it achieved a number of goals.

Specifically for Zimbabwe, he said the meeting "has done us a tremendous amount of good and left a tremendous impact on us".