

Dr M: Reject all poor quality goods

By G. Danapal

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Consumers in developing countries must be alert against the sale of dangerous and inferior goods rejected by developed nations, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said sub-standard and poor quality goods, including dangerous drugs, were still being dumped on developing nations.

Speaking to reporters after launching World Consumers' Day celebrations at the Putra World Trade Centre, Dr Mahathir said people in developing nations should reject such goods.

He noted that views had

been expressed — including a suggestion by the International Monetary Fund — that industries turning out such goods ought to be relocated in developing countries.

"It is, therefore, clear that if consumers in developing countries are not careful they will end up being targets for such goods."

In this context, he said, consumer movements in the country should play their role by helping to check the dumping and sale of such poor quality and dangerous goods, which were sometimes difficult to detect or identify.

Consumer movements must view the sale of such goods seriously and con-

sumers themselves must exercise their right to reject them, he added.

Earlier, the Prime Minister said in the era of international free trade, the dumping of these goods had been made easier.

"Suppliers in developed countries think that consumers in developing coun-

SEE PAGES 4 AND 5

tries are not sophisticated and do not have a choice.

"As a result, poor quality or dangerous goods, like environment-polluting machinery, which break down easily, harmful drugs and pesticides not allowed in their countries are exported to developing nations."

Responsible consumer movements, he added, should identify such goods and take appropriate action.

He said consumer movements should also back their actions and campaigns with fact and sound research. Otherwise, innocent traders would suffer losses and the consumer movement would lose its credibility.

The Prime Minister said consumers had now become aware that they could influence the actions of the corporate world through their right to buy and select products from manufacturers who practised good ethics.

Consumers were also aware that they must react to the modern market sys-

tem which was complex and confusing.

"They have become knowledgeable of the technological development which can endanger life and the ecology, corporate ethics and their effects on consumers.

"With the sophistication and development of the consumer movement, entrepreneurs must always be fair in their prices and give priority to quality of goods and services."

This was in line with the modern market concept where the consumer was "king," he added.

"The concept is being followed by manufacturers of export-oriented goods in Malaysia".