

G15 may admit more members

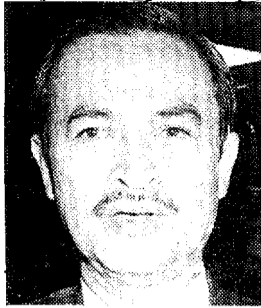
DAKAR (Senegal): Heads of state and government attending the summit are considering the possibility of expanding its membership, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said there were no fixed criteria on the selection of members but any decisions taken would be based on the number of countries in each continent.

Dr Mahathir said the G15 was prepared to invite China but that would depend on whether it was interested in joining.

Besides China, the heads of state and government were considering the possibility of inviting Iran and Chile to join the G15.

Dr Mahathir called for greater commitment



Abdullah ... 'interim secretariat should be relocated to a G15 country.'

among member countries as the objectives of the group had not yet been realised.

The G15, he said, was still a new organisation which had yet to be tested.

"Members need more time to understand its role," he told Malaysian

journalists here yesterday.

On the position of the rump Yugoslavia in the G15, Dr Mahathir replied: "As far as we are concerned, Yugoslavia no longer exists."

The dismembered country, which now comprises only of Serbia and Montenegro, was not invited to the summit by the Senegalese government.

As for the absence of Argentine president Carlos Menem from the summit, Dr Mahathir said the leaders attending the summit had been informed that Argentina had given an assurance it would host the 1994 summit.

President Carlos Menem had informed them he was not able to attend the summit due to

domestic problems, he said.

The Prime Minister, however, declined to comment on a reported statement by Argentine Foreign Minister Dr Guido Di Tella that the objectives of the G15 needed to be seriously redefined.

Dr Mahathir said he could not comment as he did not know what the Argentine meant by redefining the role of the G15.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the leaders had agreed the interim secretariat should be relocated to a G15 country but would stay in Geneva for the time being.

An annual contribution of US\$75,000 must also be made by 'each member to run the secretariat.