

Developing nations urged to

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Dr M: Let us

From
Ahiruddin Attan

DAKAR (Senegal), Sun. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has called on developing countries to adopt a "think South" policy in order to progress together.

"I have visited many South countries in order to enhance trade and investment. The South is indeed rich, not merely in population, culture and natural resources but also in other fields.

"There are numerous indigenous technologies being developed in the South which we can use in our countries at a much cheaper price and more relevant to our own development needs, but we cannot make use of these until we know what exist," he said.

But the basic problem with the South is that the South is always looking up to the North, he said.

"The message is that we start looking within and among ourselves. To begin with, we must start talking more to each other to better understand and to appreciate each other's need and requirement. We must relate and interact with each other without resorting to intermediaries."

Dr Mahathir made his point in an intervention speech during a closed session of the G-15 summit here yesterday.

He also noted that the G-15 has so far proven itself with a number of successful projects. The South Investment, Trade and Technology Data Exchange Centre (Sittdec) project, for example, can now provide the data base which is essential as a means for the South to know about itself.

The bilateral payments arrangement is proving its worth in facilitating and promoting trade.

"We must continue to build upon these processes so that the countries of the South can truly progress together.

"We must think South. We must be proud of our South tradition and institutions. We must have confi-

dence in ourselves. As a group, we can contribute towards our national resilience through collective efforts.

"This will contribute towards our own credibility."

The Prime Minister said apart from trade links, there should also be extensive personal relationship among the business community. In this context, the Businessmen and Investors Forum, held during G-15 summit designed to promote interaction among the private sector of member countries deserves the full support of respective Governments.

Dr Mahathir also stressed that the G-15 membership should be expanded especially if the countries wanting to join could contribute to the growth and development of the group.

He said it was important for South countries to work closely.

He said in three years, Malaysia's trade with member countries had increased by 150 per cent.

Speaking to Malaysian journalists here today, Dr Mahathir also said it would be beneficial to expand the G-15.

He said Iran and Chile were being considered as new members. No decision however has been made.

The G-15 is also prepared to take in China but this will depend on whether China is interested to join, he added.

Asked on the position of Yugoslavia in G-15, Dr Mahathir said: "Yugoslavia does not exist".

Belgrade was not invited by Senegal, the current G-15 chairman, to this summit.

Briefing Malaysian journalists, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the summit leaders have agreed on a number of methods and recommendations at their closed session yesterday.

They endorsed 12 new projects, minimum annual contribution of US\$75,000 (about \$187,000) to the G-15 secretariat, agreed that the secretariat should be shifted to a capital in the South and also confirmed that next year's summit would be held in New Delhi.

'look within' for growth needs
'think South'