

Indons to consult other Asean leaders on Apec

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By ROHAIZAD A RAHIM,
ANTHONY CHEW and
LEE KAR YEAN

LANGKAWI: Indonesia will consult other Asean leaders before committing itself to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) summit in Seattle, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said President Suharto had told him that he (Suharto) had yet to make any decision on the summit and felt it was necessary to consult other Asean leaders.

Dr Mahathir said Suharto had briefed him on his discussion with lead-

ers of the Group of Seven, especially on his talks with Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa and US President Bill Clinton.

"He told me he had forwarded his views to the G7 leaders and felt that his views were reflected in the communique issued after the G7 summit," he said.

The Prime Minister was speaking to reporters at the end of a three-day working visit by Suharto to the island resort.

To a question, Dr Mahathir said he was not aware the Indonesian president was requested by Clinton to persuade other Asean leaders to at-

tend the Apec summit.

Asked if he would change his mind (to attend the summit) if other Asean leaders were to go, Dr Mahathir replied:

"We already have made a public stand and we will abide by it. We will not go (to the summit)," he said.

On the East Asia Economic Caucus, Dr Mahathir said Suharto had discussed its role within the ambience of Apec and out of Apec.

"Indonesia fully supports EAEC but it wants to see how it can be implemented effectively."

He said both he and Suharto also agreed that it was essential to deter-

mine the best way to implement the EAEC with maximum result.

Dr Mahathir added that the coming Asean Ministerial Meeting/Post-Ministerial Meeting would discuss a position paper prepared by the Jakarta-based Asean Secretariat on the matter.

Dr Mahathir added that he was not opposed to EAEC operating within the framework of Apec but felt the caucus should not be tied down or restricted in its activities.

Citing the North American Free Trade Area as an example, he said the group could still operate independently despite the Apec's formation.