

# PM: We've won international respect

**By Syed Nadzri  
and Badrul Hisham**

PASIR MAS, Sat. — Malaysia has again won international respect by standing firm on its traditional family concept and the rejection of abortion as a means of contraception at the United Nations Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said Malaysia was able to convince other countries to oppose the Western delegates at the conference who had initially

tried to impose their own conditions and values on the smaller countries, including drawing up restrictions on population growth.

Describing it as another milestone in the country's image, the Prime Minister attributed the achievement to the country's continued economic and political stability.

He said the acceptance of the nine points that Malaysia had put across at the conference showed that the country wields great influence through its wealth and prosperity.

"We managed to impose our stand on the Western countries. If we are a poor country, our conditions would not have been accepted," he said at a meet-the-people session in conjunction with the Pasir Mas International Run at Sekolah Menengah Sultan Ibrahim here.

Dr Mahathir was referring to Malaysia's achievement in pushing for the conference to respect individual countries' sovereignty as well as programmes implemented according to their own values.

Malaysia's eight-member del-

egation to the conference was led by National Unity and Social Development Minister Datuk Napsiah Omar.

The country's nine points that were accepted included emphasis on the need to maintain the traditional family concept, the rejection of abortion as a means of contraception and that moral and ethical perspectives be part of the document to overcome the implications of social issues.

Dr Mahathir, who was given a

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# Wealth has made our voice heard by Western world

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rousing welcome here, said Western delegates at the conference had initially tried to impose their own conditions and values on the smaller countries, including drawing up restrictions on population growth.

"The Western countries tried to do this probably because they did not want to see a country like Malaysia prosper further through the availability of adequate human resources.

"But with our participation, we managed to stress that religious matters and demands have to be accepted. We cannot subscribe to Western values like the recognition of single mothers or the acceptance of a marriage between two men or two women.

"To us a family institution means a man, his wife and child or children and this cannot be compromised," he added.

Dr Mahathir said it could not be denied that such inroads in the international arena by Malaysia were made possible by the concept of Government practised by the Barisan Nasional, which is spearheaded by Umno.

He said the country's economic development was the product of stability which has brought peace.

"It is not that we are obsessed with just wealth and prosperity. But it has to be remembered that if we are not rich, we will be suppressed.

"That is why we draw up all sorts of plans to bring more riches to the country...and at the same time safeguard the interests of Bumiputeras," he said, adding that the existence of many big corporations run by Bumiputeras points to the success of BN policies.

The Prime Minister said in the light of the prosperity being enjoyed, it was important to be wary against any attempt to split Malaysians,

especially the Malays.

The existence of Pas, he added, was one such move which was made by the British when they ruled the country before independence.

He said the British colonial masters, realising that Malays had rallied too strongly behind Umno in the fight for independence, then allowed Pas to be formed so that the community could not be united.

"But we were lucky that in the initial years after independence, the Malays were almost totally in support of Umno...and this paved the way for stability and national development.

"Then Pas began to use religion as a political tool and this led to a split among Malays. But they did not care about this and carried on," he added.

He said the BN Government had always been fair towards non-Muslims and this had won it more respect, including from other countries.

He said the desire of newly-independent Muslim countries of the former Soviet Union like Albania and Uzbekistan to learn the Malaysian system of Government bore testimony to this.

"These people were oppressed under Communist rule. Now that they are independent and can practise Islam freely, their leaders make constant visits here to learn from us.

"But, sadly, although Malaysia is a model country in the eyes of the world, not everyone here wants to accept the fact. They claim that the Government does not practise Islamic ways.

"These people should realise that they are using Islam as a political tool," he added.

Dr Mahathir ended his speech by expressing hope that Kelantan would "return to the BN fold" for the good of Islam.