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Mahathir-dialogue

IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 5 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has likened moves towards a meaningful dialogue between the Group of Seven (G7) industrialised countries and the Group of 15 (G15) developing nations to that of the tango which "takes two to do it".

Stressing that the G15 needed a response from the G7, the prime minister said Japan, the only Asian member of G7, had undertaken to forward the views of the G15 to the exclusive club of the world's developed countries.

He said French president Jacques Chirac had written to him as chairman of the G15 on the need for closer collaborations between the two groupings.

The collaborations included some kind of representation of both the groups at each other's meetings, he said at a joint media conference as the G15 leaders wound up their seventh summit at the Palace of the Golden Horses here today.

" We are making some progress...eventually we may be able to tango," said Dr Mahathir, who chaired the three-day summit which included a one-day retreat at Melaka yesterday.

In their joint communique, the leaders welcomed the call by the G7 for new global partnerships between developed and developing countries.

The G15 members are Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal, Venezuela and Zimbabwe. Kenya was admitted into the grouping at this summit.

On South-South cooperation, Dr Mahathir said, there had been considerable results since the G15 was formed eight years ago.

" For one thing, we know each other better, we visit each other more and our trade has increased many times," he said.

In the case of Malaysia, a strong advocate of South-South cooperation, he cited the country's increasing trade with Peru as an example.

Bilateral trade which only amounted to US\$6 million five years ago, now stood at US\$100 million, he added. -- BERNAMA

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