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PM: Give developing nations permanent Security Council seat

Zainon Ahmad in Teheran

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said developing countries should be given a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council should the much debated reform of the world body result in an increase of permanent members from the present five.

He said it was a practical move but it depended on whether the people were prepared to accept changes as there were those who seemed to think that the UN should remain as it was in order to be effective.

But Dr Mahathir said the question of who was going to be the representative of the developing countries also posed a problem as many seemed to think they were special and had the right to represent the developing countries.

"Perhaps, it is a good thing to have an organisation like the Organisation of Islamic Conference to represent a group of Muslim countries or a group of developing countries," he said in response to a question at a Press conference before his departure after attending the three-day OIC summit.

An Iranian journalist had asked what he thought of the proposal by Iranian leader Ali Khamenei in his speech when opening the summit on Tuesday that the OIC should have a permanent seat in the Security Council.

But he said the question of the representative should be resolved by the organisation concerned.

"It is an idea worth studying and if we can reach an agreement on that, I do not see why not."

On the proposal of an Islamic common market, he said it would take a lot of studying and much effort as it was a difficult project considering that Muslim countries were spread all over the globe.

He said Afta, a project of Asean, had taken a long time to be implemented but that was easier as all the members were in the same region.

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