

14/04/2000

Dr M to propose summit's views be relayed to G-7

Hardev Kaur in Havana

HAVANA, Thurs: The outcome and decisions of the Group of 77 (G-77) Summit will be presented to the leaders of the world's developed nations, the Group of Seven (G-7).

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will propose that the chairman of G-77 be authorised to submit the views and concerns of developing countries to the G-7 in Japan.

Dr Mahathir will seek endorsement from the plenary session of the G-77 Summit for Chief Arthur C.I. Mbanefo of Nigeria, as chairman of G-77, to present the views to G-7 when they meet in Okinawa, Japan, from July 21 to 23. The G-7 groups the US, the UK, France, Italy, Canada, Japan and Germany.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said the move to present the collective views of developing countries to the G-7 would demonstrate the solidarity of G-77.

Since the developed nations would deliberate on global issues, such as globalisation, financial flows, reforms of the financial architecture, poverty reduction, third world debt and currency exchange rates, it is important that they obtain views of G-77.

The decisions and outcome of G-7 have far-reaching impact on developing countries even though they are not involved in the discussions nor are their views and concerns taken into account.

The Plaza Accord, for example, which decided on the exchange rate of the yen against the US dollar had an adverse impact on the economies of developing countries.

The Summit of G-77, the first since it was set up in 1964, is seen as being "relevant" and is not just rhetoric and a "speakers club". The plight of its members is being taken very seriously and efforts are being made to ensure that the developed world takes note of these concerns.

Meanwhile, Syed Hamid said the response to Dr Mahathir's speech at the opening of the Summit yesterday had been very positive. The message contained in the speech was considered "balanced and reasonable".

The Prime Minister had stressed that globalisation should consider results rather than methods.

"If the results are good then by all means implement as currently interpreted and practised, but if the result is bad for anyone, then globalisation must be reinterpreted and modified until the expected results are achieved," he told the Summit.

Dr Mahathir's message of the need for developing countries to be "united" and to work together to be effective was also taken up and echoed by most of the speakers yesterday.

General Musharaaf of Pakistan, according to Syed Hamid, told Dr Mahathir that he (Dr Mahathir) was not just the Malaysian leader but was seen as "the leader of developing countries" for his frankness, boldness and very pragmatic approach in solving problems.

The Tanzanian Foreign Minister also told Dr Mahathir, that he (the Prime Minister) spoke for the developing world. "You are the voice of the developing world. You say what we think," the minister reportedly told the Prime Minister.

Others said they had similar views (as Malaysia) but did not articulate them as clearly or were afraid to do so.

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