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Third World wants to be party to G-7 decisions: Dr M

Hardev Kaur in Havana (Cuba)

HAVANA (Cuba), Fri: Developing countries will not be willing to consider any resolution made by the Group of Seven (G-7) where the former is not represented.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said: "Whatever decisions they make, even if we are present, if the decision is bad for us we will still not accept."

He told a press conference at the press centre in Havana that it is important for developing countries to give their views in the hope that they (G-7) will modify their stand so that it would not hurt us.

Dr Mahathir was asked about his proposal in the plenary session of the Group of 77 (G-77) meeting that the chairman of G-77, Chief Arthur C.I. Mbanefo of Nigeria, present the views to G-7 when they meet in Japan in July.

In making the proposal, he spoke of the adverse impact the decision of G-7 has had on developing countries.

Citing the Plaza Accord as an example, the Prime Minister said the revaluation of the yen was designed to reduce the deficit of rich countries with Japan by making Japanese goods more expensive.

"But when the yen is revalued, our borrowings of yen require more local currencies in order to buy yen to repay the loans. The Plaza Accord increased the debt burden of developing countries.

"I see no harm in applying some pressure and at the same time have a dialogue," Dr Mahathir said, adding that "even now we find that some of the G-7 countries are quite willing to talk to us".

In fact, the G-15 countries have already asked the G-77 to allow its representatives to talk to the G-7.

The G-77 decision for Mbanefo to present its views was "some kind of pressure on the G-7 to listen to us".

Dr Mahathir hastened to add: "But I am quite sure that others who are in a position to have a dialogue with them can also do so."

The G-7 groups the US, the UK, France, Italy, Canada, Japan and Germany. Russia attends the meetings as an observer.

The group is scheduled to meet in Okinawa from July 21 to 23.

On whether the different levels of development in the G-77 had an impact on their views and interests, Dr Mahathir said while "our interests may be different, all agreed that they want a common stand to get the G-7 and the other rich countries to listen to the views of the poor countries".

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