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PM described as an inspirational leader

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir has been described as a leader who inspires and whose model of globalisation represents the voice of all levels of society.

International Labour Organisation director-general Juan Somavia said Dr Mahathir, who addressed the 90th International Labour Conference in Geneva yesterday, was truly a leading voice of the South.

Somavia, who introduced the Prime Minister to the delegates before he began his address, described him as leader who inspires and whose bold innovations in Malaysia's development were admirable.

"He has a reputation for speaking his mind and challenging norms. I have seen him at the United Nations, Davos, Copenhagen and at international forums."

Conference president Jean-Jacques Elmiger, who is Switzerland's Secretary of State said Dr Mahathir's speech was "a wonderful message of hope and courage".

In his closing remarks, Elmiger said: "You have shown extraordinary persuasive strength. There are much wisdom in your views on globalisation.

"You have spoken on the need for respect at all levels, on the independence of individuals and making social justice a reality for everybody in the world."

Delegates to the conference include labour ministers and leaders of workers' and employers' organisations from most of the ILO's 175 member states.

Also there were International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, Human Resource Minister Datuk Fong Chan Onn, Malaysian permanent representative to the UN (Geneva) Datuk Paduka Rajmah Hussein, UN special envoy Tan Sri Razali Ismail and Malaysian Trade Union Congress president Datuk Zainal Rampak who is ILO vice-president.

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