

27 MAY 2002

Cuepacs-Vatican

CUEPACS SUPPORTS DR MAHATHIR'S TRIP TO VATICAN NEXT MONTH

KUALA LUMPUR, May 27 (Bernama) -- Cuepacs, the umbrella body for civil service unions, today described Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's impending meeting with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican next month as a recognition to the leader and the nation.

Cuepacs president Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam said Malaysians should be proud of the invitation extended by the Roman Catholic Church leader to Dr Mahathir for a visit in conjunction with the prime minister's trip to Switzerland and Luxembourg from June 9 to 12.

He said no Malaysian should try to turn the visit into an issue as Dr Mahathir was seen as the champion of the poor and oppressed irrespective of their faith.

"Dr Mahathir has stood up for the poor and oppressed be they Muslims or Christians. He is recognised as an international leader and the invitation by Pope John Paul II is a recognition for Malaysia," he told Bernama when contacted here.

Siva said the meeting would be for the betterment of mankind.

"Dr Mahathir is not only a leader of the Muslim world but also recognised by the Western nations as a capable leader who wishes to see the world as a better place to live in," he said.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir confirmed that he had agreed to accept the invitation and that the decision would be endorsed by the Cabinet.

Various parties including the Catholic Church of Malaysia have welcomed the meeting, saying it can enhance relations between Muslims and Christians at the national and international levels.

-- BERNAMA

DC MAM YBY