

27 FEB 2002
Mahathir-Commonwealth
COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES NEED TO ACT

From Zaharah Othman

LONDON, Feb 27 (Bernama) -- Commonwealth countries need to act on issues such as disparity between the rich and poor countries, terrorism and market access if they were to remain relevant.

This was the outcome of the Commonwealth Partnership for Technical Management (CPTM) meeting yesterday.

The three-hour closed door meeting was attended among others by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni.

According to Datuk Dr Mihaela Y. Smith, chief executive of CPTM Ltd after the meeting, these are three key issues of concern to developing countries and the Commonwealth countries need to take action on these issues if they want to remain relevant.

Dr Smith said that President Museveni, as convenor of CPTM Fellows, will articulate these issues at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Australia next month.

Dr Mahathir said the meeting was held "to prepare the minds" of member countries.

"This is just an internal discussion to prepare the minds for CHOGM and also for the Langkawi International Dialogue," he told journalists waiting in the pouring rain outside the CPTM Ltd building.

Dr Smith, who greeted the Prime Minister on arrival, briefed him and President Museveni before the special closed working session.

Others present were Lord Craig of Radley, convener of the Crossbench Peers, Prof Thomas DeGregori, an economist with the University of Houston, Sir Martin Laing, director of John Laing Plc, Sir Charles Masefield, vice chairman of BaE Systems and Sir Geoffrey Pattie, senior partner of Terrington Management.

The CPTM evolved from an idea mooted at the CHOGM in Kuala Lumpur in 1989. The objective is to boost technical cooperation between member countries' public and private sectors.

-- MORE
ZO DC MFJ RM