

25/02/2003

Pledges of support for new chairman

reports on "Conference of Heads of State or Government of The Non-PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, assuming the baton as NAM's new chairman from South African President Thabo Mbeki yesterday, was met with pledges of support and co-operation from the leaders of the Movement's 116-member countries.

Congratulating Malaysia and Dr Mahathir, NAM heads of state and government were confident the Prime Minister would be able to steer the Movement to greater heights.

Malaysia will chair NAM for the next three years until 2006 when Cuba hosts the 14th Summit.

Leading the chorus in assuring Malaysia of undivided support were outgoing chairman Mbeki, who was confident that NAM would continue to be an effective movement under Malaysia.

Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, who spoke on behalf of the Asian group at the opening of the NAM summit, said Asia had full trust in Dr Mahathir's leadership.

Belarus Foreign Minister Mikhail Khvostov said under Dr Mahathir's chairmanship, NAM should be able to weather the numerous challenges ahead.

"The task ahead for Malaysia as the new chair is obviously enormous given the political, economic and social scenario facing NAM member countries at present," he said.

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf said his country had no doubt that Dr Mahathir's dynamic and visionary leadership would help transform the Movement in consonance with demands of the changed international environment.

"With you (Dr Mahathir) guiding our Movement in this defining moment, we have no doubt that this ship (NAM) will cruise to its coveted destination," he said.

Expressing confidence in Dr Mahathir's leadership, Philippine President Gloria Arroyo-Macapagal said Dr Mahathir had provided a model for continuing revitalisation in the 21st century.

"Dr Mahathir has turned Malaysia as an example of the continuing relevance of Islam in modernising a nation for peace and development," she said.

Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai was confident that Dr Mahathir's election as chairman of the NAM conference would ensure the movement's success.

King Mohammed VI of Morocco said Dr Mahathir would be able to give NAM the impetus to be able to voice and echo the concerns of the developing world.

Republic of Mozambique President Joaquim Alberto Chissano said his country was confident that under Dr Mahathir's skilful and able leadership, NAM would achieve the desired results.

Describing Dr Mahathir as a fervent advocate of the cause of the developing countries, Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said the Malaysian Prime Minister would bring the needed strength and vigour to NAM and enhance its role and relevance to peace, security and prosperity of the world.