

Mahathir elected

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VIENNA, Wed. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was today elected by acclamation as president of the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (ICDAIT).

The other contender for the post, Bolivian Foreign Minister Guillermo Bedregal, by consensus became chairman of the main committee of the conference which opened here today.

Lobbying for the post, which started months before the conference, continued after delegates began arriving in the capital city of Austria.

Further consultations delayed the opening by UN secretary-general Javier Perez de Cuellar by one and a half hours.

There was loud applause after Mr de Cuellar an-

nounced the election of Dr Mahathir. The Prime Minister was then escorted to the chair by the UN chief of protocol.

Dr Mahathir, the Asean candidate, received support from most of the Asian and European nations, while Mr Bedregal's support came from Latin American countries and some African and European nations.

Among other things, as president Dr Mahathir will preside at plenary meetings of the conference. But most important will be his ability to "direct the discussions" during the conference.

Also elected to the main committee of the conference are 26 vice-presidents including two co-ordinating vice-presidents who will act on the president's behalf in his absence.