



**MERRY-MAKING:** Abdullah chatting with Malaysians from all walks of life at a function in New York on Tuesday evening. — *Bernamapic*

# PM: Make NAM earn its stripes

BY JOHAN FERNANDEZ

NEW YORK: The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) must show it is not a debating society but an indispensable forum for developing countries. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

He said the movement must prove it had principled positions, programmes and concrete activities and had a continuing mission as many of its goals had not been attained.

Abdullah urged the members to enhance co-operation, strengthen cohesion and increase solidarity in order to make a difference in international issues.

He said their detractors had already consigned the movement to the dustbin of history, dismissing it as a spent force, obsolete and irrelevant.

"But we all know that our tasks and challenges as a movement are far from over," he said in a keynote address at the NAM foreign ministers meeting at the United Nations on Wednesday.

Abdullah said that the ministerial meetings of NAM, particularly the annual meeting here, coincided with the UN General Assembly and served as an important and useful purpose of reinforcing their collective positions and commitments.

He said the ministerial meetings should be used as a mechanism for formulating strategies and approaches and collective action.

Abdullah said NAM had a duty to ensure that the United Nations was taken seriously as an important, indispensable, multilateral forum.

"As part of this reform, it is essential to strengthen the multilateral process in international relations."

"Indeed, given current developments, the strengthening of multilateralism is now more urgent than ever before."

Abdullah called on the movement to work closely with the United Nations in promoting and strengthening multilateralism, the primacy of international law and a new world order that was just and democratic.

Abdullah said one question that had long remained unresolved was Palestine.

"NAM must continue to provide strong and undiminished support for the Palestine people in their struggle against Israeli occupation and oppression and their inalienable rights to establish a Sovereign and independent Palestinian state," he said.

The Prime Minister said NAM must work actively with the United Nations at conflict resolution and prevention and be at the forefront of the global disarmament campaign.

NAM member states should also address the threat posed by international terrorism.

He said NAM must have its own agenda and strive to influence international decisions.

"We have to enhance our co-ordination."

"More importantly, we will have to enhance our own expertise on global issues of importance to our countries," he added.