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## Dr M glad accord reached

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**SEPANG:** Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is glad that a peace deal has been reached between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

"I'm glad that Malaysia, the Philippine government and the people (MILF) involved have agreed to a settlement.

"Fighting each other, to me, is a waste of effort, waste of money and waste of life, and you don't achieve anything.

"So you should come around to solving any such conflict in a sensible way," said Dr Mahathir after presenting awards to winners of the Proton Green Mobility Challenge 2012 at the Sepang F1 Circuit here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir, however, was quick to dismiss claiming any credit for the peace deal, which brought to end years of bloodshed in southern Philippines.

"I am not claiming any credit for this because this is (the result of) a languid kind of diplomatic negotiation.

"Both sides have to make some sacrifices because if you insist on saying no, or say that what I demand must be given in order for there to be peace, then there will be no settlement.

"Everybody has to make some sacrifices in order for all to benefit and have a win-win situation."

When Philippine president Gloria Arroyo assumed office in January 2001, Malaysian and Indonesian assistance was sought to persuade the MILF to come to the negotiating table.

MILF had withdrawn from the talks and disbanded its negotiating panel in June 2000.

Dr Mahathir, who was the prime minister then, sent his top aides to Mindanao to convince MILF's late chairman, Hashim Salamat, to resume talks with the Philippine government, and had peace negotiations continued since then.

In 2001, the Philippine government and MILF signed an agreement to end hostilities in Mindanao and this was witnessed by Dr Mahathir and Arroyo.

Malaysia had since then played the role of a third-party facilitator. Its facilitation was largely administrative but on difficult issues, it became a mediator.