

SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE, ASEAN TOLD

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10 member nations
must assert stand
on global issues,
says PM



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IT is important for Asean countries to stand in solidarity and speak in one voice when dealing with the effects and challenges of the economic superpowers' global trade war.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the collective voice of all 10 Asean members was important to strengthen the regional bloc to allow it to assert its stand on global issues.

"Asean is unable to move as separate entities.

"We need to come together

and speak in one voice.

"All Asean countries are members of the World Trade Organisation and by coming together as one, we can make our stand stronger to the superpowers.

"We have to remember that nobody will listen to you unless you are rich, powerful or strong.

"Therefore, Asean needs to have a strong voice to assert its stand at international forums."

Dr Mahathir said this during a dialogue at the Asean Business and Investment Summit at IMPACT Exhibition and Convention Centre in conjunction with the 35th Asean Summit here yesterday.

The session was moderated by Asean Business Advisory Council chairman Arin Jira.

Dr Mahathir said solidarity among Asean member countries was important to avert intimidation by world economic superpowers.

"For example, if Malaysia or Thailand goes alone at an international forum, the voice will not be effective.

"If we go alone, we will be bullied."

He said it was important members agree on a decision prior to heading for such international meetings.

Dr Mahathir said Asean's 650 million population contributed to a massive consumer market

and this would serve as a catalyst to economic growth in the region.

"We must make full use of our strength.

"Our strength lies in our market.

"We have a market of 650 million people. As our economy grows, we will have a stronger voice.