

'Whites Must Appreciate Land Reform'

the Herald (Harare) – 9 November 2005

ZIMBABWE is a rich country with great potential for economic development and the white population should appreciate the rationale behind land reform designed to address land imbalances, former Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has said.

Briefing journalists after meeting President Mugabe at State House yesterday, Dr Mahathir said it was important to note that before Zimbabwe's independence, whites owned a larger portion of the fertile land and now the Government had moved to correct the situation. The former Malaysian premier said the land issue should be put in its proper context.

Asked about his views on the situation in Zimbabwe, he said it was calm and normal. Commenting on world events, Dr Mahathir lamented the surfacing of the unipolar system in which a few individual powerful western nations wanted to dictate the pace of events. This, he said, was a bad practice that did not augur well for developing nations. Dr Mahathir said the world was no longer safe when compared to the past owing to the emergence of international terrorism.

"No, it is not (safe), it is getting worse for example . . . travellers are no longer safe because the US wants to find out whether (or not) you are hiding bombs in your shoes," he said. Dr Mahathir said this in reference to the victimisation of smaller nations by the US in the name of fighting international terrorism.

The former Malaysian leader said after his retirement in 2003, he has been travelling extensively and delivering guest lectures at various international forums.

Dr Mahathir, who is in the country for a three-day official visit, was accompanied by his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah DT Hj Mohd Ali and Foreign Affairs Minister Cde Simbarashe Mumbengegwi. He leaves today en-route to Lesotho to attend the Southern African International Dialogue (SAID), a forum established to discuss various issues affecting the region and the way forward.

SAID is modelled along the lines of the Langkawi International Dialogue (LID), a brainchild of the former Malaysian premier. Zimbabwe and Malaysia enjoy excellent relations.

Source: <http://allafrica.com>