

PM: Small nations must unite to protect interests

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Small developing countries like Malaysia must unite to voice their anxiety on issues affecting their interests, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

The Prime Minister said there was no one country which could stand on its own and there was no one country which could dominate others through its political, military and economic strength.

"While we see worrisome failure to overcome the challenges concerning a more free global trade system which benefits all, we believe greater benefits can be derived from trading activities among the (small developing) countries," he added.

Dr Mahathir said it was important that these countries made efforts towards establishing a multi-lateral trading system and support the setting up of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The Prime Minister said this at the dinner he hosted for his Tunisian counterpart, Dr Hamed Karoui, who

arrived here yesterday with a 10-member delegation for a three-day official visit to Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia believed that South-South co-operation had great potential not only in trade, but also in investments which would generate greater flow of currency as well as related services and encourage technological transfer.

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia was also worried over the way global issues were managed and tackled.

"We often find that the resolutions involving many parties were made by a small privileged group.

"We are so disappointed with the failure to resolve the Bosnia-Herzegovina tragedy fairly. The world has never seen the abuse of human rights that is so blatant as is happening there.

"However, the superpowers and the United Nations which have clearly declared that they will not allow abuse of human rights anywhere, have failed to give meaningful assistance.

"While we believe the UN system can provide the proper mechanism to establish a fairer world order, the Gorazde incident had resulted in Malaysia completely losing its confidence in UN's credibility to help weak countries.

"Therefore, it is necessary that the process of making global resolutions be made truly democratic," he said.

On Tunisia, he said he was impressed with the Tunisian Government's efforts towards economic and political reformation.

"Based on the pragmatic approaches taken by the Government, I am convinced Tunisia will achieve better progress and prosperity in the future," he added.

Malaysia, he said, was willing to co-operate and contribute in the efforts to improve Tunisia's economy.

"Though we (Malaysia) are not a major capital exporter, we have expertise in certain sectors which we are prepared to share with Tunisia if relevant," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he was also impressed with the ac-

tive role played by Tunisia in international diplomacy, especially in the efforts to promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

"It is hoped that your visit today will pave the way and promote greater interaction in the economic and trade sectors between our countries," he said.

He said that the agreement on economy and technical co-operation and the memorandum of understanding on co-operation in the fields of science and technology which were signed today between the two countries were manifestations of their commitment to strengthen bilateral co-operation.

Other agencies from the two countries, he said, had also signed an MoU to consolidate their co-operation in the science and technology and trade sectors.

"I am convinced that these agreements will bring about a co-operation that will benefit the people of both countries and boost development efforts in both countries," he said.