

Malaysia in ITA but will form producers' group

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Malaysia will be participating in the 6th International Tin Agreement but will at the same time go-ahead with the formation of a tin producers' association, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced today.

He said Malaysia feels the agreement may not be effective "so we need a back-up organisation (the producers' association) to protect our interests."

Sources said today that the participation of Malaysia and its two Asean partners, Thailand and Indonesia, will be conditional.

The three nations are believed to want conditions similar to the 5th ITA in the new pact.

Primary Industries Minister Datuk Paul Leong, Thai Industry Minister Chatchai Choonhavan and Indonesian Mining Minister Prof. Subroto ended their two-day meeting here this afternoon.

All three declined to comment on the outcome of their meeting and only said that they would be holding Press conferences at 2 pm (local time) on Tuesday in their respective capitals.

They are expected to officially announce their participation in the 6th ITA and the formation of the tin producer's association.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also said today that Datuk Leong would be announcing the formation of the producers association after it is finalised.

The Press conferences on

Tuesday come a day before the special meeting of tin producers and consumers who have agreed to join the 6th ITA.

The meeting was originally to be held on June 10 but postponed to Wednesday on Malaysia's request which wanted time to review the effectiveness and viability of the pact, after getting a clearer picture of the support for the agreement.

The Fifth ITA runs out on June 30 and the new pact is due to come into effect on July 1.

So far, only half the consuming countries have joined the agreement although it requires the support of 65 per cent to come into force provisionally. More than 80 per cent of producers have joined the agreement.