

B E717 AAE
MAHATHIR-UN

86
KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT 22 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY URGED MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO TAKE GREATER EFFORTS AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AT ALL STAGES -- FROM PRODUCTION TO THE CURE AND REHABILITATION OF ADDICTS.

+NO ONE COUNTRY CAN MOUNT AN EFFECTIVE FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS ON ITS OWN. THIS PROBLEM TRANSCENDS ALL NATIONAL BOUNDARIES, AND EVERY COUNTRY AND EVERY AGENCY MUST THEREFORE COOPERATE AND COORDINATE THEIR FIGHT,+ HE SAID.

HE WAS OPENING THE UNITED NATIONS EXPERT GROUP MEETING HERE ON RECOMMENDED METHODS OF TESTING CANNABIS AND AMPHETAMINE-METHAMPHETAMINE ANALYSIS. FORENSIC EXPERTS FROM 16 COUNTRIES INCLUDING JAPAN, THE UNITED STATES, UNITED KINGDOM, WEST GERMANY AND MALAYSIA ARE ATTENDING THE FIVE-DAY MEETING.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE DRUG MENACE IN MANY COUNTRIES HAD REACHED ALARMING PROPORTIONS AND THERE MUST BE TOTAL COMMITMENT FROM THE HIGHEST POLITICAL LEVEL TO COMBAT IT.

HE SAID IN MALAYSIA THE DRUG MENACE WAS REGARDED AS A THREAT TO SECURITY AND THE GOVERNMENT HAD VOWED TO FIGHT THE MENACE WITH ALL ITS AVAILABLE RESOURCES AS THE WHOLE SOCIAL FABRIC WOULD COLLAPSE IF DRUG ABUSE WAS LEFT UNCHECKED. -- MORE
1350MST 22 09 86

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT TO FIGHT THE DRUG MENACE, THE GOVERNMENT HAD DRAWN UP A NATIONAL NARCOTICS ACTION PLAN.

+OUR STRATEGY NOW IS TO PLACE GREATER EMPHASIS ON PRIMARY PREVENTION WHILE MAINTAINING OUR AGGRESSIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT POSTURE,+ HE SAID.

THE AIM WAS TO INCULCATE AMONG THE YOUTH A TOTAL REJECTION OF DRUGS AS IT WAS THE MOST EVIL OF HUMAN VICES, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ADDED.

PREVENTION EFFORTS, HE SAID, MIGHT NOT BRING IMMEDIATE RESULTS BUT, WITH THE SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT REQUIRED OF ALL SECTORS IN THE COMMUNITY, THEY WOULD BE EFFECTIVE IN THE LONG RUN.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT TO SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AND PREVENTIVE MEASURES, THE GOVERNMENT HAD COME UP WITH TOUGH DRUG LAWS TO DETER THE +MERCHANTS OF MISERY AND DEATH+ FROM CARRYING OUT THEIR ACTIVITIES IN MALAYSIA. -- MORE
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THE PRIME MINISTER REITERATED THAT MALAYSIA WAS NOT MAKING ANY APOLOGY FOR THE COUNTRY'S TOUGH DRUG LAWS AS IT REGARDED THE DEATH PENALTY NOT JUST AS A DETERRENT BUT AN APPROPRIATE PUNISHMENT FOR DRUG CRIMINALS WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS WORSE THAN MURDERERS.

+THEY DELIBERATELY SPREAD MISERY AND DEATH IN THEIR QUEST FOR EASY WEALTH. WE WILL CONTINUE TO HANG THEM UNTIL NONE IS LEFT WHO WISH TO PROFIT FROM THIS VICIOUS CRIME, + HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT TO ENSURE THERE WAS NO MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE, THE +CHAIN OF ACTIVITIES+ INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY LAW MUST, BEFORE THE EYES OF THE LAW, BE KEPT UNBROKEN.

HE SAID THAT THE EXAMINATION OF DRUG EXHIBITS WAS A VERY IMPORTANT +LINK+ IN THIS CHAIN OF EVIDENCE, AND SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS HAD A VERY CRUCIAL ROLE TO PLAY IN THE OVERALL EFFORTS TO STAMP OUT THE DRUG MENACE.

FORENSIC CHEMISTS WHO WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANALYSIS AND PROVIDING CERTIFICATES FOR PROSECUTION PURPOSES WOULD CONTINUE TO HAVE A HEAVY MORAL AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY, PARTICULARLY IN MALAYSIA AND SOME OTHER COUNTRIES WHERE STIFF PENALTIES HAD BEEN PROVIDED, HE SAID. -- MORE

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HOPED THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WOULD BE ABLE TO ARRIVE AT A SCHEME OF HARMONISED DEFINITIONS TO COVER ALL DRUGS, INCLUDING +DESIGNER DRUGS+ WHICH WERE POSING A MAJOR THREAT.

HE POINTED OUT THAT LIMITATIONS IN THE DEFINITION OF DRUGS HAD ALLOWED ABUSE OF SUCH DERIVATIVE DRUGS TO BE OUTSIDE THE AMBIT OF THE LAW.

HE SAID MALAYSIA FACED AN INCREASING PROBLEM IN THE USE OF CANNABIS BY ADDICTS AND THE ABUSE OF AMPHETAMINES MIGHT POSE A FUTURE THREAT AS HEROIN SUPPLIES DECREASED DUE TO TOUGH ENFORCEMENT MEASURES.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HE BELIEVED THE MEETING OF UN EXPERTS ON DRUGS WAS VERY ESSENTIAL FOR THE FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION AND EXCHANGE OF IDEAS TOWARDS THE HARMONISATION OF ANALYTICAL METHODOLOGIES AND DEFINITIONS OF DRUGS.

HE OFFERED TO SHARE WITH UN STATES, EXPERTS AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES THE EXPERIENCES AND EXPERTISE GAINED BY MALAYSIAN FORENSIC CHEMISTS BY HOLDING A REGIONAL COURSES OR WORKSHOPS IN COLLABORATION WITH THE RELEVANT UN ORGANISATIONS.

THE MEETING OF THE UN EXPERT GROUP ON DRUGS IS ORGANISED BY THE UN DIVISION OF NARCOTIC DRUGS AND THE ANTI-DADAH TASK FORCE OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT. --

BERNAMA

1445MST 22 09 86