

DR M CONFIDENT OF CLOSE CO-OPERATION

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From V.K. CHIN

VIENNA, Fri. — Dank Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad closed the nine-day International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking here today, confident that the participating nations will work together in the fight against the drug problem.

The Prime Minister, the president of the conference, said:

"No nation or political leadership can now afford to ignore or stand in the way of the campaign to rid the world of the scourge of drugs and drug traffickers.

"The next important question is whether we, as the international community can translate our political commitment into effective and sustainable action. History is littered with high and grandiose pronouncements that are cast aside unimplemented.

"Our response to this is the Comprehensive Multi-disciplinary Outline (CMO). This document does not have the status of a legal charter but must nevertheless be regarded as a morally binding pledge towards a collective effort on the part of all participating countries to implement the guidelines for reducing drug abuse and illicit trafficking."

Dr Mahathir said peoples, nations and international institutions would find in the CMO something which, when acted upon, would contribute towards an integrated universal assault on drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

"No nation need say that the recommendations of the CMO are incompatible and that there is nothing it can contribute towards the effort. Where there is political will, there will always

be a way in the CMO," he added.

Dr Mahathir said he was encouraged by the many suggestions made in the plenary debate for follow-

up activities to the conference not only to retain the high level of awareness of the problem but also to enable the delegates to take stock of continuing developments and to monitor progress of their efforts.

He felt that perhaps the United Nations General Assembly could follow up on suggestions such as the holding of a follow-up conference, proclaiming June 17 as an international day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking and the establishment of an international drug abuse prevention resource centre.

"In my opening remarks, I alluded to the inadequacies of resources available to counter the drug problem," Dr Mahathir said.

"This is true not only at the international but also at the national level. At the national level, individual governments will have to find the much-needed resources

that must necessarily be diverted to tackle this urgent problem.

"At the international level, extra effort is needed to make available additional funds if we are to make permanent gains on drug traffickers and prevent drug addiction.

"Now is the time to do this. The longer we wait, the greater will be the fund needed."

However, the Prime Minister said increased funding alone could not make the impact if the principal organs and bodies of the United Nations involved in the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking were not effectively co-ordinating their activities.

"There have been views expressed for a body to be formed to look into some of the programme's proposals discussed during the conference," he said.

"While enhanced interna-

tional co-operation such as on-going efforts on the draft convention against drug trafficking and psychotropic substances could begin plugging essential loopholes, much will depend primarily on national efforts by individual countries.

"The parallel efforts at the national and international levels that must increase after this conference should help bring about improved results in our struggle against the drug problem."

Dr Mahathir said the declaration adopted today was a clear expression of the collective will to respond to the drug menace.

He said it underlined a shared responsibility to provide appropriate response and resources to combat the menace as well as heralding the advent of a more systematic and balanced world approach.

OVERSEAS: