

Dr M: Step up war on drugs

P Mahathir - overseas Trips

From ZAINON AHMAD

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VIENNA, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today appealed to the international community to step up their individual efforts if they want to turn the tide of the war against drug traffickers and the spread of drug addiction.

He said while enhanced international co-operation such as on-going efforts on the draft convention against illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances could begin plugging essential loopholes, much would depend on national efforts of individual countries.

Countries should now reinforce and give added emphasis to their anti-drug efforts after declaring at the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

(ICDAIT) that they were committing their political will to the international war against the drug scourge.

Governments would have to find the much-needed resources that must necessarily be diverted to tackle this urgent problem.

"No nation or political leadership can now afford to ignore or stand in the way of the campaign to rid us of the scourge of drugs and drug traffickers," he said when closing the conference.

As president of the conference the Prime Minister reminded the 139 attending countries that the declaration "is a clear expression of our collective political will to respond to the drug menace."

The declaration heralded the advent of a more systematic and ba-

lanced world approach to the problem.

To ensure that the political commitment was translated into effective and sustainable action, the conference had come out with the comprehensive multidisciplinary outline (CMO) of future activities in drug abuse control.

While the CMO did not have the status of a legal charter, Dr Mahathir said it 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.

The varied approach of the CMO, added to its applicability and relevance whatever the particular si-

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'If there's a will, there's a way'

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tuation of the country concerned.

No nation need say that the recommendations of the CMO were incompatible and that there was nothing it could contribute towards the effort.

"Where there is political will there will always be a way in the CMO," he said.

The president of the conference which began on June 17 was happy at the suggestions for follow-up activities so that countries could retain the high level of awareness of the problem.

There was a suggestion for a follow-up conference (Bolivia had volunteered to host it) and also another one to make June 17 as an international day against drug abuse and illicit

trafficking.

Dr Mahathir commended the suggestions and proposals to the appropriate forum of the United Nations.

"Perhaps, the General Assembly, following preliminary review and recommendations by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and through the Economic and Social Council can follow-up on these proposals."

He counselled against the suggestions for the formation of an international body to look into the implementation of some of the proposals discussed during the conference in view of the current financial situation worldwide.

"I would counsel that in the warly instance, this be done through institutions already at hand," he said.