

Global effort to wipe out dadah needed

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Malaysia, which is waging a relentless war against dadah abuse, today called for a concerted global effort in eradicating illegally grown narcotic crops as an effective means to put an end to the menace.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad also proposed the setting up of a United Nations force to assist dadah producing countries in the eradication and destruction of dadah crops.

He said countries facing dadah abuse or illegal trafficking problems must also reinforce their resolve to produce a strong and effective measure to deal with "drug barons".

"Let us act responsively and decisively to deny safe havens for traffickers and their unlawfully acquired assets and properties," said the president of the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (ICDAIT) which is spearheading the campaign against dadah abuse.

"For the campaign to be really successful, it will require global action and the co-operation

of all countries," he said in a speech read by Deputy Home Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Ayub at the opening of the three-day East Asia Pacific Regional Narcotics Conference.

On narcotic crops, he said there was a growing acknowledgement among countries that crop substitution must finally lead to crop eradication and elimination.

"This is where the United States of America and other developed countries who are major donors for rural development or crop substitution in producing countries should ensure that eradication targets are met," he said.

The conference is attended by about 70 United States Embassy officials from 13 countries in the region. It is jointly sponsored by the United States' Department of East Asia and Pacific Bureau and the Bureau of International Narcotics Matters.

The conference is the second held in Malaysia in which United States officials dealing in dadah matters from the East Asian and Pacific region meet with officials from Washington.

Also present at the opening

ceremony was the United States Ambassador to Malaysia, Mr John Monjo.

Dr Mahathir suggested that further financial assistance to producing countries be given on condition that an agreed time schedule for crop eradication was adhered to.

He said an effective crop eradication programme would require an evaluation of the project area to determine the success of the programme.

It also requires policing of areas where crops have been destroyed and substituted to ensure that there is no illegal replanting of poppy, coca and cannabis, he added.

He said in this regard, the ICDAIT might consider the possibility of establishing a United Nations force to work together with producing countries in the eradication or destruction of the crops and the policing of the area.

The force, he added, could also assist producing countries to strengthen policing and enforcement in crop substitution areas to prevent replanting.

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Let's not slacken resolve, says

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Dr Mahathir also said Malaysia welcomed any effort towards an early negotiation of the Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances to supplement the two existing conventions on drugs.

This, he said, was in view of the increasing audacity of drug barons in their operations.

"Let us not slacken our resolve to produce a strong and effective instrument to deal with them."

Dr Mahathir said there must be responsive and decisive action to deny safe havens for traffickers and their illegally acquired assets and properties.

Dr Mahathir also said experience had taught the Government that a co-ordinated and integrated action plan was necessary to effectively counter the dadah problem.

He said it was important for the political leadership to work in tandem with the administrative and judicial system in the country.

"There has to be clear definition of roles and responsibilities among and between Government agencies, non-Governmental bodies and the community.

"Differing values and attitudes towards dependence-producing drugs and substances should not divert us from pursuing a tough policy on addiction and trafficking," he said.

Dr Mahathir further said that in line with the comprehensive multi-disciplinary outline (CMO) adopted by ICDAIT, Malaysia was of the view that future actions in dadah abuse control and prevention should encompass every aspect of the problem, including primary prevention, rehabilitation, legislation and enforcement; manpower development; research and evaluation; as well as international collaboration and co-ordination.