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MAHATHIR-IFMSO

KUALA LUMPUR, NOV 13 (BERNAMA) -- STRONG RELIGIOUS AND MORAL VALUES, ENHANCED BY A SOUND FAMILY BACKGROUND, CAN ENSURE FREEDOM FROM DRUG ABUSE FOR THE YOUTH OF TOMORROW, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

AS SUCH, HE ADDED, THE ROLES OF RELIGION AND PARENTS, AND IMPROVEMENT OF MANAGEMENT SKILLS OF NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS (NGOS) AS WELL, MERITED ATTENTION AS LONG-TERM STRATEGIES FOR ERADICATING DRUG ABUSE.

+THE COMMUNITY AND THE FAMILY REPRESENT THE LAST FRONTIERS IN SAFEGUARDING OUR SURVIVAL AS SOCIAL AND HUMAN BEINGS,+ HE SAID IN A SPEECH READ OUT AT THE OPENING OF THE 10TH CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS (IFMSO) FOR THE PREVENTION OF DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE AT HOTEL SHAMSRI-LA HERE.

THE SPEECH WAS READ BY FINANCE MINISTER DATUK PADUKA GAIN ZAINUDDIN WHO EXTENDED AN APOLOGY FROM DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR FOR BEING UNABLE TO BE PRESENT AT THE OPENING AS +HE IS DOWN WITH A FLU,+ HOWEVER, THE PRIME MINISTER'S WIFE, DATUK PADUKA DATIM SERI DR SETI HASKAH, WAS PRESENT.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT IN LINE WITH THE THEME OF THE CONFERENCE -- +FROM GLOBAL COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY ACTION+ -- THERE WAS A NEED TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY AND PARENTS BY RE-ORIENTATING AND RE-EDUCATING THEM TO CONFORM WITH THE CHANGING DEMANDS OF SOCIETY. -- MORE
1414MST 14 11 23

MAHATHIR-IFMSO 2 KUALA LUMPUR

ON THE NGOS, HE SAID THERE MUST BE CO-OPERATION AT ALL LEVELS TO ENSURE THAT THE PROBLEM OF DRUG ABUSE AND TRAFFICKING WAS EFFECTIVELY TACKLED.

HE STRESSED THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF UNDERTAKING DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAMMES IN THE COMMUNITY WAS NOT THE SOLE MONOPOLY OF ANY INDIVIDUAL NGO.

+FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY INTERVENTION AGAINST DRUG ABUSE, A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH NEEDS TO BE ACQUIRED. FOR GREATER EFFECTIVENESS, IT SHOULD BE MORE PEOPLE-ORIENTATED RATHER THAN JUST SERVICE-ORIENTATED,+ HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE PARTICIPATORY APPROACH WOULD ALLOW THE GROWTH OF LOCAL LEADERSHIP, COMMUNITY CONSCIOUSNESS AND REVIVAL OF SOCIAL CONTROLS THAT WOULD DETER THE SPREAD OF DRUG ADDICTION.

IN THIS WAY, HE ADDED, PLANS FORMULATED WOULD BE MORE IMPLEMENTABLE AS THEY WOULD BE BASED ON LOCAL NEEDS, PROBLEMS AND RESOURCES. -- MORE
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MAHATHIR-IFNSO 3 KUALA LUMPUR

A TOTAL OF 437 DELEGATES AND OBSERVERS FROM 29 COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES, AUSTRALIA, SWEDEN, WEST GERMANY, JAPAN, SWITZERLAND, BRITAIN, CANADA AND ASEAN COUNTRIES, ARE ATTENDING THE FIVE-DAY CONFERENCE.

THE THIRD PAN-PACIFIC CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOL AND ADDICTIONS (ICAAA) IS ALSO BEING HELD WITHIN THE CONFERENCE TO EXPOSE INFNSO AND ICAA MEMBERS TO EACH OTHER'S ACTIVITIES.

IFNSO PRESIDENT DR JAMES M.N. CHI'EN, IN HIS SPEECH, NOTED GREATER INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION FOLLOWING LAST YEAR'S INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING (ICCAIT) IN VIENNA AT WHICH DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WAS CHAIRMAN.

HE SAID THIS HAD RESULTED IN SOME SPECTACULAR SEIZURES AS WELL AS ARRESTS AND CONVICTIONS OF SOME HIGHER MEMBERS OF INTERNATIONAL DRUG SYNDICATES.

DEPUTY HOME MINISTER DATUK NEGAT JUNID, WHO IS CHAIRMAN OF THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE, CALLED FOR STRONG SANCTIONS AGAINST ALL LEVELS OF DRUG TRAFFICKERS, USERS, AND SELLERS. -- HORE

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MAHATHIR-IFNSO 4 KUALA LUMPUR

+BY FAILING TO APPLY STRONG SANCTIONS WE ARE UNCONSCIOUSLY RELEASING A MESSAGE OF HYPOCRACY AND TOLERANCE TO SUCH SHAMEFUL AND ILLICIT PRACTICE AND POSSIBILITY EVEN LETTING IT BE KNOWN THAT WE COMDOONE SUCH ACTS.+ HE SAID.

+WE ARE PERMITTING SUCH GROUPS TO GROW AND FLOURISH, THEREBY FRUSTRATING OTHER ATTEMPTS TO COMBAT THE PROBLEM.+

HE SAID THERE SHOULD BE NO HAVENS FOR THOSE INVOLVED AND EVERY EFFORT MUST BE MADE TO PREVENT THEM FROM USING THEIR ILL-GOTTEN GAINS +TO BUY PEOPLE OR GOVERNMENTS TO ACCEPT OR COMDOONE THEIR SINISTER ACTIVITIES.+

DATUK NEGAT JUNID SAID THE RECENT ASSASSINATION OF A HIGH RANKING OFFICIAL IN A SOUTH AMERICAN STATE BY DRUG TRAFFICKING MAFIA-TYPE GANGS WAS A CLEAR INDICATION OF WANTON VIOLENCE ASSOCIATED WITH DRUG-TRAFFICKING. -- BERHANA

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