

Govt to support NGOs in fight against dadah abuse

By AHIRUDIN ATTAN

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MALAYSIA will continue to support non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in their efforts to free the international community from dadah abuse, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

In his address to the 10th International Federation of Non-Governmental Organisations (IFNGO) in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, the Prime Minister said dadah abuse can be viewed as "the greatest scourge of the present era, worse than the hunger problem in some developing nations, pestilence and calamities in others.

"It has brought about unprecedented levels of addiction, corruption, economic destabilisation and acts of terrorism," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the non-governmental organisations are the symbols of social consciousness, expression of people's participation in the process of development and change, and the instruments of community intervention against social problems.

"The full involvement of concerned non-governmental organisations as well as the mobilisation of community resources in programmes of dadah abuse prevention has great potential," he added. His speech was delivered by Finance Minister Datuk Paduka Daim Zainuddin.

Underlining the importance of the non-governmental organisations in complementing and supplementing the efforts

of governments, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said these organisations should form a united front against dadah abuse.

"They need to cooperate at all levels to ensure that the problem of dadah abuse and trafficking is effectively tackled," he said.

The Prime Minister added that the role of religion and parents as well as the improvement of management skills of the non-governmental organisations merit attention as "long-term strategies towards eradicating dadah abuse."

He proposed that these organisations practice a more people-oriented, rather than service-oriented, approach for greater effectiveness. Plans formulated to combat the da-

dah problem should also be based on local needs, problems and resources to make them more implementable.

Earlier, Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid, who is chairman of the organising committee, called for sanctions against all levels of dadah traffickers, addicts and sellers.

He said those involved must not be allowed to buy people or governments to accept or condone their sinister activities.

The five-day conference is jointly sponsored by the Malaysian Government and the Colombo Plan Bureau. Representatives from Australia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand are attending.