

PM: WE WILL CONTROL USE OF CFCs

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By S.C. Cheah

PENANG, Tues. — Malaysia will restructure its strategies on domestic and international investments and trade to reduce use of substances which can deplete the ozone layer.

This will entail control of the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons in several important industries, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said the relevant activities included the assembly of electronic chips, manufacture of room air-conditioners and refrigerators, and making of rubber foam products.

He said Malaysia was committed to reducing its consumption of CFCs and halons by 20 per cent by the year 2003, and 50 per cent by the year 2008.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia should have access to any research and technology on developing any environmentally safe CFC

particularly the developing nations, had not been fully taken into account.

"Our global efforts to save the ozone layer are further complicated by the unnecessary provisions of trade restrictions to non-parties, a form of non-tariff barrier," he added.

He said that a serious consequence of not acceding to the Protocol was that by Jan 1, 1992, CFC-containing goods exported from non-parties would be banned by importing countries which were parties to the Protocol.

"This is only mitigated by further restrictions to be imposed in 1994 on the export of goods which are produced with the controlled substances," he said, adding that all nations should be active in future work on the Protocol.

Dr Mahathir suggested that a global environment trust fund be set up and managed by an international body.

substitutes.

He hoped that safe substitutes could be discovered early.

"Otherwise, developing nations such as Malaysia may be unable to fulfil the Montreal Protocol's requirements," he added.

(The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer requires producing countries to reduce by 50 per cent consumption within 10 years, from 1986.)

Dr Mahathir regretted what he saw as the double standards in global efforts to save the ozone layer.

He said the Montreal Protocol, of which Malaysia is a party, required developing countries to cut their use of CFCs to a level that was 70 per cent lower than that of developed nations.

"The developed countries should cut their own consumption of CFCs and halons, not by 50 per cent, but at least by 85 per cent by the year 2000.

"It is for the developed countries to take effective measures to curb their heavy consumption of fossil fuels and ozone-depleting substances," he said when opening a four-day international conference on *Tropical Ozone And Atmospheric Change* at Universiti Sains Malaysia.

About 250 delegates from 40 countries are attending it.

Dr Mahathir said the full implications of the Montreal Protocol to the low-consuming countries,

He said the fund could be financed by levies imposed on the emissions of greenhouse gases and the production of ozone-depleting substances.

He said any international initiative on environmental issues must take into account the overall balance of world development.

Such consideration should include solving the debt crisis in many developing countries, the need to increase flow of development funds and stabilising foreign exchange earnings of low-income commodity producers, Dr Mahathir said.

He said the root of environmental problems rested with the mismanagement of the global economy and the deliberate distortion of the value of renewable natural products from that of man-made capital goods and services.

"All this time we have been misled by the way we have been calling 'economic growth'.

"If we use up our own natural resources, then that is capital depreciation, not a cost to us. But when we import technology and machinery, we have to count their depreciation as a cost to the nation," Dr Mahathir said.

He said that unless developing nations received a fair deal for their natural resource-based produce and exports, they should not be discriminated against for whatever little damage they might do to the environment.