

# PM: Set up global fund to protect environment

By Zulkifli Shukor

PENANG, Tues. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today serious consideration should be given to the setting up of a global international fund as an interim measure to protect the environment.

He suggested that the "Global Environment Trust Fund" be financed by levies imposed on the production of Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and other ozone depleting substances.

Levies could also be imposed on production of chemicals that are in competition with the production and use of natural-product

based biocides.

Another possible source of revenue was a tax on imports of natural products including agro-based and forest products that are not produced on a sustainable basis.

The fund could be managed by an international body with wide representation. Dr Mahathir said when opening the four-day international conference on Tropical Ozone and Atmospheric Change at Universiti Sains Malaysia here.

He said environment is far too important to be left entirely to external "free" market forces.

Global environmental issues must take into consi-

deration the overall balance of world development, particularly in solving the debt crises in many developing countries, increasing the flow of development finance and stabilising foreign exchange earnings of low-income commodity producers.

Dr Mahathir said for most people in the developing world however, the so-called "global environmental issues" were quite remote from the management of local problems.

"To address global environmental issues, the limited technical and financial

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# Malaysia: Not too late to assess ozone problems

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resources of developing countries are being sapped away from earlier commitments of reviving economic growth and tackling overdue environmental problems," he said.

Malaysia is committed to sustainable development which addresses issues relating to environmental protection and preservation while ensuring that the issues are not abused by certain quarters with vested interests.

"Environmental challenges and opportunities should be treated as a major motivating factor to improve international economic relations and to resist negation of the open market system."

Dr Mahathir said the requirements of the 1987 Montreal Protocol for global reduction in the consumption of ozone depleting substances was a clear case of double standards.

The Protocol, he said unfairly limited the consumption of developing countries to a level 70 per cent lower than that of developed countries.

He added that global efforts to save the ozone layer were further complicated by a form of non-tariff barrier, that is, unnecessary provisions of trade restrictions to non-parties.

Noting that global action in the name of the Protocol was unprecedented in the history of international law, the Prime Minister said the full socio-economic implications of the Protocol to low consuming countries, particularly developing countries, had not been fully taken into account.

"The developing countries are required to use less than 0.3 kilogrammes of the controlled substances per capita.

"In contrast, the Protocol requires the producing countries, namely the developed countries, to cut consumption within 10 years to only 50 per cent of their 1986 consumption."

Dr Mahathir said it was not too late for all concerned to re-assess problems relating to the protection of the ozone layer.

He said the release of the controlled substances from the tropical countries were less significant than that of the temperate regions and that the effects on the tropical environment were the least understood.