

PM., We may skip Earth Summit

By K. H. Lim

PETALING JAYA, Fri. — Malaysia may not attend Earth Summit in Brazil next year if the proposed international conference on the environment was merely held to criticise Malaysia, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said it would be pointless for Malaysia to attend and be abused by international environmental organisations.

If Earth Summit was to be held to pressure "weak" countries, it would be better if these countries held their own conference and excluded the advanced nations, he said.

Only then would the truth emerge, Dr Mahathir said. "If we go there to hear them abuse us, then it's no use."

Dr Mahathir was commenting on a report that several environmental groups would launch an environmental war against Malaysia, including demonstrating at embassies in The Hague and London.

These groups have declared Oct 7 as International Action Day for the Penans and would mark it with protests against the timber trade in 60 cities.

The report in the Washington-based *Executive Intelligence Review* also stated that the environmental groups would try to force an economic embargo that would destroy the economy of Malaysia.

Bernama carried an excerpt of the report two days ago.

Asked if the Third World might then hold a parallel conference, he said he had not decided on this yet.

"I want to know more about this 'war on Malaysia'. I need to know what they mean."

The Prime Minister was speaking to reporters after opening the 18th annual general meeting of the College of General Practitioners and a Conference on Family Practice.

Dr Mahathir said these

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environmental organisations wanted the Penans of Sarawak to remain "forest people".

"They want the Penans to be a 'museum piece' so that they can come and look at the 'last of the cavemen'."

"This is their intention. What can we do about it?"

The report which also stated that Malaysia was the first stage of their campaign which would be extended to other countries. It was chosen as it was small and could be isolated from the rest of the world.

Asked to comment on this, Dr Mahathir said: "This is certainly their intention. It has nothing to do with the Penans."

"The Penans are a discovery for them to use as an excuse to pressure a small country."

"As I have said in the past, they still want to dominate us."

"They are descended from a colonial and imperial race. Now that they cannot colonise us politically, they will try to colonise us indirectly."

He said they chose Malaysia because it was a small country which was developing and "a bit outspoken".

On the United Nations-organised Earth Summit, he said if the intention was Malaysia-bashing, there was no point for Malaysia to attend.

"If this is the intention, then it will not be a conference to look for ways to overcome environmental problems."

"We all know that the environment has been polluted by advanced countries, not Malaysia. But they want to use this from the political aspect."

"If we compare the fate of the Penans with the Australian aborigines or the American Red Indians who are confined to reservation areas, we know that confining them to reservations led to them being left behind by development."

"They want the Penans to suffer the same fate."

"Our intention is to ensure the Penans enjoy the same benefits from development and progress like others in Malaysia."

"In America, while the people who colonised America and who took the land of the Red Indians are rich and well, the Red Indians are nowhere to be found."

"So this is their intention. They want to perpetuate their hegemony."