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M' SIA WILL NOT ATTEND EARTH SUMMIT

Mahathir-environment

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 29 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is firm in 'its stand not to attend the Earth Summit in Brazil next year if the conference is aimed at finding faults with the developing nations especially on the question of tropical forests.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that although his British counterpart, Encik John Major, had persuaded Malaysia to attend to voice its opinion it would be meaningless if there were no positive views and ideas from the developed countries.

+We do not want the conference to concentrate on the wrongdoings of the developing countries like Malaysia and focus is only given to the question of the tropical forests, +he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said this at a press conference at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport on his return here after attending the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Harare, Zimbabwe and an official visit to Tanzania.

He said that Malaysia would only decide to attend if there was an undertaking by the developed nations that the conference would produce positive ideas.-- more

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UN Conference Of-Environment and Development (UNCED) Secretary-General Dr Maurice Strong said here yesterday that he hoped Malaysia would attend the conference to enable the country to express its views on the issue.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said that besides the developed nations vouching to produce positive ideas at the conference, Malaysia also wants to know what measures would be taken by these countries to maintain the revenue from timber and not merely to boycott Malaysian timber.

+What is causing environmental pollution is not only the tropical forests but fossil fuel widely used in developed nations, the felling of trees in the temperate region and various other factors that have an adverse effect on the environment, +he said.

He also commented on the haze and questioned why there had not been any offer from the developed countries to help in overcoming the situation.

+The excuse that they have not been invited I cannot accept because without any invitation they had lived with the Penans, chained themselves to trees... so now do come to tackle the haze,+ he said. -- more

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Asked to comment on the statement by Dr Strong that developing nations expect Malaysia to be the leader at the conference to pursue the issue on the environment, the Prime Minister said: +It is not enough to have only the developing nations... developed nations should also have a positive attitude... especially the NGOs.+

He said that some regard the NGOs (non-governmental organisations) as AGOs or anti-government organisations and no matter where, they seemed to know more than all the governments in the world.

+There is not a positive task conducted by the NGO other than focussing on the poor countries to ensure that they remain in poverty,+ he said. -- Bernama

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