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GREENING OF THE WORLD TO BE INITIATED AT KL ENVIRONMENT CONFAB
Environment-video

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KUALA LUMPUR, April 22 (Bernama) -- The Ministerial Conference of Developing countries on Environment and Development beginning here Monday will see a Malaysian initiative to get all countries +to green the world.+ The initiative, which Malaysia would push for adoption by the developing countries, calls on each country of the world to have at least 30 per cent of their land covered by trees.

Malaysian conference sources said the move +to green the world+ would be made in a video presentation after the keynote address by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the opening of the three-day conference.

The 30-minute video entitled +An Initiative for the Greening of the World+, was produced by the Science, Technology and Environment Ministry.

The conference will be attended by delegates from 53 developing countries and observers from eight developed countries, six international agencies, 12 foreign non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and eight local NGOs. -- more

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Environment-video 2 Kuala Lumpur

The KL conference aims to elicit a common stand by the developing or South countries for the Earth Summit in Rio in June.

The sources said each head of delegation, including those from the NGOs and international agencies would be given a copy of the tape.

Dr. Mahathir requested the ministry to produce the video following smear campaigns mounted by Green movements in the west against Malaysian timber policies and the Penans in Sarawak.

The +greening of the world+ initiative was voiced by Science, Technology and Environment Minister Law Mieng Ding at the last preparatory meeting (Prepcom) in New York earlier this month.

He had said that despite the smear campaign against Malaysia over its tropical forests, 61 per cent (or 20 million hectares of the land) of the country was still covered with forests and another 4.19 million hectares were under forest plantations.

He also noted that many developing countries in Africa, Asia, Oceania and South America would have no problem meeting the 30 per cent target of forest cover. They could in fact meet even a 50 per cent target. -- more

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Environment-video 3 (last) Kuala Lumpur

The situation was different in the developed or North countries. Only 5.7 per cent of the total land area in the United Kingdom was covered by forests and in the Netherlands it was eight per cent, Denmark (11.4 per cent), Australia (13.8 per cent), Belgium (21.1 per cent) and the United States (28.3 per cent).

A Malaysian source said under the +green the earth+ initiative, the developing countries want the developed North, especially the NGOs, to look at their own backyards first before rapping the poorer countries over logging.

During the Pnepcom meetings, he recalled that some delegates of the South countries were asking why sugar beet was cultivated in the North when they could import sugar at lower cost from South countries like the Philippines.

They argued that the land used for beet growing could be re-forested if the countries were serious about saving planet Earth from pollution, environmental degradation and the ensuing climatic changes. -- Bernama

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