

PM: Address issue of development impact on environ

BT 25 APR 1992

By FAUZIAH ISMAIL

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed the hope that the Second Ministerial Conference of Developing Countries on Environment and Development will address critical issues relating to the impact of development on the environment and the balance that must be achieved between development needs and environmental degradation.

In his message in the programme for the three-day conference, which begins on Monday, the Prime Minister says it is not only timely but also provides a good opportunity for participating countries to discuss the various issues relating to the environment and development.

"Developing countries by definition are in the process of development. But development cannot be effected without infringing on the environment.

"How and to what extent development impinges on the environment is of concern to developing countries," he says.

Dr Mahathir says obviously developing countries cannot be expected to give up development altogether in order to retain the environment in its pristine condition.

But developing countries cannot disregard environmental degradation either.

"It is imperative therefore that we continue to cooperate with one another to



ensure that while economic growth and development go on, they do not result in environmental deterioration," he says.

Meanwhile, Science, Technology and Environment Minister Law Hieng Ding said Dr Mahathir will be briefed today on the latest developments in the ongoing senior officials meeting prior to Monday's ministerial-level conference.

He said he would also brief the Prime Minister on the outcome of the New York preparatory committee meeting (Prepcom) for the Earth Summit in Brazil in June.

He said Malaysia would look seriously into recommendations made by its Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Tan Sri Razali Ismail, on the need for Malaysia to attend the summit, formally known as the United Na-

tions Conference on Environment and Development (UnCED), in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

He said the Cabinet had discussed the recommendations in its meeting but he could not reveal the outcome of the discussion.

As of yesterday, 39 ministers, six ambassadors, six senior officials and a princess have confirmed attendance.

Fifty three nations will participate in the conference. Out of the 11 developed countries attending the conference as observers, Australia, Japan, Germany, Portugal, the UK and Norway will be represented by ministers.

Sweden, the Netherlands, Canada and France will be represented by senior officials. The US delegation will be led by an ambassador.

Other observers to the conference are senior officials of the African National Congress and the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Nine international organisations, one international non-government organisation (NGO) and eight local NGOs will also be participating.

Bernamea adds: More than 200 foreign newsmen have signed up to cover the conference.

Deputy Science, Technology and Environment Minister Peter Chin said 215 journalists representing the foreign media will cover the day meeting.