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MAHATHIR CALLS FOR FAIR COMPENSATION FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Mahathir-Timber

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KUALA LUMPUR, April 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr  
Mahathir Mohamad said today developing countries must be, fairly compensated  
if they are not to cut down their trees so that the world may continue to  
have oxygen.

+If it is in the interest of the rich (nations) that we do not cut down  
our trees, then they must compensate us for the loss of income,+ he said.at  
the opening of the Second Ministerial Conference of Developing Countries on  
Environment and Development here.

He added: +If we have to service the world's need for oxygen, for  
ecological balance, then we must be fairly compensated.

+Or else, allow us our right to our timber wealth.+

He said the developed countries had no tropical forests but by  
involving environmental issues, they wished to control the exploitation of.,  
forests in developing countries.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was fully aware of the role of tropical  
forests in the preservation of the delicate balance of-the environment. --  
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Mahathir-Timber 2 (last) Kuala Lumpur

But Malaysia was also conscious that it was a developing country which  
needed the wealth afforded by the forests.

+We do not cut down our trees foolishly: We need living space, we need  
space for agriculture and we need the money from the sale of our timber,+  
he said.

The developed countries, he added, incessantly talk of fair  
compensation but what they had done instead was 'to launch a **boycott** of  
Malaysian timber, reasoning that if they did not buy the timber, it would  
then not be cut.

+It is so simple, that is, if you can ignore the hundreds of thousands  
of people whose lives depend on the timber industry, and if you can ignore  
'the loss of government revenue with which we subsidise and support our  
people, particularly the poor,+ Dr Mahathir said.

+What the North is doing is not just to preserve the forest but to make  
Malaysians pay for it. Is this equitable?

+Yet the extraction of timber can easily be reduced without making us  
pay for it. If the rich will pay twice the price', logging can be reduced by  
half, +

He also said that Malaysia could cut down even **less** trees without  
losing income if the developed nations were to relocate to the country  
processing industries which would provide added value. -- **Bernama**

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