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Mahathir-Summit

KUALA LUMPUR, April 27 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today developed countries should earnestly prove they are committed to implementing sustainable development to convince the developing nations into attending the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June.

The Prime Minister said their commitment was a prerequisite if the Summit were to draw up a workable environmental protection programme.

+I think before we go to Rio, there must be a commitment from the developed countries.. only then can Rio succeed,+ he told reporters after opening the Second Ministerial Conference of Developing Countries on Environment and Development at the Crown Princess Hotel here.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would decide whether or not to attend the Earth Summit after studying the outcome of the 'three-day conference.

He said although the conference could reach a **consensus**, it would **only** be among the developing nations. -- More

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+Whether the developed nations recognise the consensus among the developing countries is another matter,+ he said.

He said the outcome of the KL conference would be **endorsed** as the Kuala Lumpur Declaration and submitted to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

Delegates from 54 countries are attending the conference here to arrive at a common stand on environment and development issues' to be tabled in Rio.

On a proposal by several delegates that Malaysia act as 'spokesman at the Summit, the Prime Minister said: +There are so many who can be spokesman. +

However, he said, Malaysia would consider such a request if it later decided to attend the Earth Summit.

Dr Mahathir also criticised some non-governmental **organisations** which resorted to violence in their so-called efforts to protect the Earth.

+They are actually not bothered about the environment. They are doing this just to sell their raw produce,+ said the Prime Minister.-- more

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He also rapped certain parties' lack of concern for forest fires whereas, he said, such calamities destroyed the environment.

Dr Mahathir said his proposed 'greening of the world initiative, expounded in his opening address, was well-received by the delegates.

+From my conversation with the delegates, I gather they support my proposal,+ he said.

Malaysia has suggested that 30 per cent of the earth's terrestrial area be covered by forests by 2000.

In his speech,, Dr Mahathir also announced that Malaysia would undertake to ensure that at least 50 per cent of its land area would be under forests. -- Bernama

▼27/04/18-55MST