

PROMOTING A CLEANER ENVIRONMENT

# PM: Rich must share burden

28 APR 1992

MORE REPORTS: D3 and EDIT: D6

By AHMAD A. TALIB

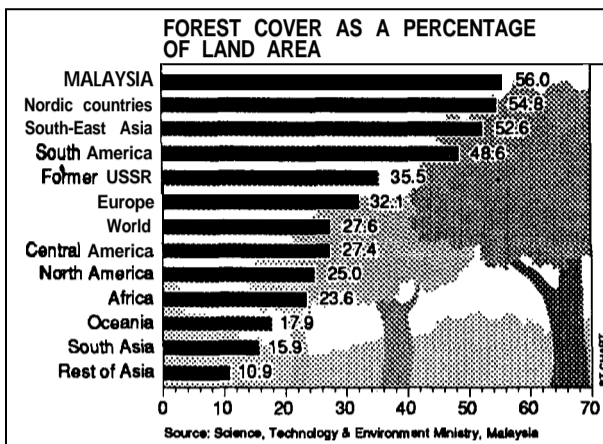
DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday put forward a strong case for a joint exercise to be undertaken by industrialised and developing countries to promote and try to maintain a cleaner and greener planet.

In an eloquent address as he articulated his points for a greener world, the Prime Minister took his arguments further by telling the industrialised countries that only through burden sharing can there be any success in promoting a cleaner environment.

He was speaking to a packed hall of ministers and delegates from 54 participating countries and officials from industrialised nations as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) at the Second Ministerial Conference of Developing Countries on Environment and Development in Kuala Lumpur.

He said: "If the environment is going to be cleaned, those most responsible for polluting it must act. Eighty per cent of the pollution is due to activities in the industrially developed North.

"They must first clean up their backyard. Their NGOs



should stay at home and apply pressure on their own governments, their industrialists and their military leaders.

"The developing countries must of course do their bit, too. The first thing is for them to come together to debate on the common stand. Let there be no break in our ranks when we talk about the environment. We will share the burden strictly in proportion with our culpability and our capacity.

"By no means can we accept that we sacrifice our development in order that the rich and the powerful can enjoy ever improving standards of living. Indeed, it is the rich who must be prepared to sacrifice their progress in the interest of our development."

The Prime Minister, whose speech was met with repeated applause, reminded developing countries that they have a very heavy responsibility to ensure that

South-South cooperation is effective in environment and development.

The South must identify specific areas of cooperation and interaction, particularly in forestry, technology transfer and sound environmental management. The South must set an example of international cooperation and even-handedness as its own contribution to the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Unced), which is expected to meet in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June.

It is truly regrettable that despite two years of preparations for the Unced meeting, major issues and problems have yet to be resolved. The financial issue remains unresolved.

The nations of the South are very disappointed that the North is unwilling to respond either in terms of quantum or other tangible commitments. If the rich North expects the poor to foot the bill for a cleaner environment, Rio will become an exercise in futility.

It must be remembered that Unced is also about

Cont'd Bock Page, Cold

# PM: Rich must share burden

■ FROM PAGE ONE 28 APR 1992

development. There will be no development if poor countries are not allowed to extract their natural wealth.

The only way for them to develop and yet avoid damage to the environment is for them to receive substantial material help. "To ask the poor to help the rich is against all human principles of charity and fairness," the Prime Minister said.

He said if the world community of nations sincerely believe in equity and burden sharing, why not reafforest the deserts of the world and the vast farms in Europe and America which produce subsidised food that the world does not need?

"If you can draw up ground water to build exclu-

sive golf courses in the deserts of California, if you can create huge lakes in the middle of the desert on which to build luxury hotels, can you not use the same technique to water the desert and reforest it?"

"We do not want to obliterate all our deserts, of course. One cannot know what disaster will follow if we do this. But the farms of Europe and America which were hacked from the hard and soft wood forests of yesterday and which today produce food inefficiently, can very well be returned to their pristine condition.

"The planting material, the technology and the experts are all available to make this project a success."