

PM: West must be committed

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad reiterated yesterday that Malaysia will not go to the Earth Summit if the West is not committed to ensuring its success.

He said Malaysia was still unsure if the consensus reached among the developing countries in Kuala Lumpur would be accepted by the developed countries in Rio de Janeiro in June.

"I think before we reach Rio we should get the commitment from the West to ensure that the meeting will be a success," he said after opening the conference.

The conference is to finalise the Kuala Lumpur Declaration to be presented at the summit, which is

officially known as the United Nations Conference on Development and Environment (**Unced**).

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would consider its attendance after the ministerial conference.

"Other countries can also become the spokesman for the South," he said when **commenting** on calls from some countries that Malaysia should play a leading role at **Unced**.

"It is unfair for the developing countries to sacrifice their development and sources of profits for the developed countries."

On the militant stand by some Western non-governmental organisations (**NGOs**) he said they were using environmental issues for economic gains

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tions must set national greening targets and those which have no suitable land must contribute adequate funds to developing countries with available land.

"The North, in particular, should not find this difficult because it has the funds, the technology and the resources. They can divert the subsidies for their inefficient farms to a massive re-afforestation of these farmlands instead. No new funds are therefore needed, and yet the result will be a greener and bigger carbon sink."

He urged the world community to urgently establish a global fund to support this greening target.

"The fund would serve to finance reafforestation and afforestation programmes as well as forest rehabilitation and maintenance. Contributions to the fund should be based on population size, wealth, and ability to meet greening targets as well as other relevant factors.

"Countries which have levels of carbon dioxide emissions that exceed a defined threshold should pay on the basis of an agreed schedule. However, nothing in these proposals must compromise the principle of the sovereign right to development.

"The greening of the world will hopefully inspire a new spirit of international co-operation and partnership in which global resources are fairly shared. If successful, we would have solved at least partially an important environmental problem."

Dr Mahathir added that 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.

"We have a heavy responsibility to ensure that South-South co-operation is effective in the areas of the environment and development. The South must identify specific areas of co-operation and interaction, particularly in forestry, technology transfer and environmental management."