

PM: Rio Summit must be truly global

THE Prime Minister wants the Earth Summit in June to take important steps for a true global partnership.

"I sincerely hope the historic opportunity at Rio (de Janeiro) will not be wasted," he said.

In his usual tough speech, he said the South had suffered enough and it was wrong that developing countries be made scapegoats of the past sins of the North.

"The South cannot remain the repository of the resources for the North, including locking up its forest to serve as the global green lung and its genetic resource laboratory," he said when opening the conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The North, he said, must help the South to develop, for it was in their environmental, economic and security interest that they did so.

Dr Mahathir regretted that the financial issue on the cleaning of the Earth remained unresolved.

"The South are disappointed that the North is unwilling to respond either in terms of quantum or other tangible commitments," he said.

He said if the rich North expected the poor to foot the bill for a cleaner environment, Rio would be an exercise in futility.

"It must be remembered the Unced (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) is also about development. There will be no development if the poor countries are not allowed to extract their natural wealth," he said.

The only way for them to develop and yet avoid damage to the environment was for them to receive substantial material help, he said.

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