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MALAYSIA IS FOR CONVENTIONS THAT BENEFIT IT, SAYS MAHATHIR

Mahathir - Rio

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KUALA LUMPUR, June 9, (Bernama) -- Malaysia will only put its signature on conventions at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro if they are beneficial to it, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister, ~~who will leave for Rio de Janeiro~~ tonight, said Malaysia was studying the various conventions being offered at the summit.

+If the agreement is ambiguous with no certainty of any action, it will be meaningless even if we sign,+ he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after witnessing the signing of an agreement for the setting up of a Regional Tyre Technology Centre between Sime Darby and Sumitomo Rubber Industries of Japan here.

Malaysia had earlier said it would not sign the Convention on Bio-diversity and Climate Change as it contained several provisions which did not meet the objectives of its struggle.

Dr Mahathir said that for instance the Convention pertaining to climate change did not indicate that any specific programme would be undertaken to reduce global warming. -- more

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Mahathir - Rio 2 Kuala Lumpur

Asked on the possibility of Malaysia changing its stand pertaining to the conventions on bio-diversity and climate change, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the matter was under study and no decision had been made.

+We are studying them in depth as we want them to be meaningful,+ he added.

Nevertheless he was confident Malaysia would be able to put its signature on conventions suited to its needs, at Rio de Janeiro.

On the feeling among a few Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that Malaysia was a spoilsport at the Earth Summit, he said Malaysia had the right to do what it thought was correct.

He said not all NGOs had such feelings and moreover it was also not possible to please everyone. -- more

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Mahathir - Rio 3 Kuala Lumpur

On the reported disinterest in the summit by the United States, Dr Mahathir said if countries which had the means did not want to finance programmes planned by the summit then it would indeed be difficult for countries which did not have the means to do so.

Dr Mahathir also responded to a question on the Cuepacs request that the government fulfill its pledge to pay annual bonus to civil servants from the end of this year.

The Prime Minister said the government only pledged to pay the annual bonus to civil servants if the country's financial situation permitted.

Last month, Cuepacs Secretary-General A.H. Ponniah said the government should pay the annual bonus of at least \$1,000 each to the civil servants at the end of this year as was pledged when the Sistem Saraan Baru (SSB) was announced. -- more

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Mahathir -- Rio 4 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Ponniah had said even though the government said bonus would be paid on condition that the country's financial situation permitted, Cuepacs felt the condition was too subjective to be ascertained.

Dr Mahathir said the question of the condition being too subjective did not arise because the country's financial situation could be gauged from statistics that would be released next year.

+We pledged to give the annual bonus if the country's economic performance is good and if the government is able to collect adequate tax this year,+ the Prime Minister said. -- Bernama

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