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NORTH MAKING BUSINESS OUT OF ENVIRONMENT, SAYS DR M

Mahathir-Summit

From Kuala Lumpur

RIO DE JANEIRO, June 15, (Bernama) -- The rich North countries will continue to make business out of the environment because the capacity of the developing countries to devise environmentally friendly technology is limited, Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Sunday.

+They are now thinking of how much, and the devices they can make,+ he said to Malaysian newsmen during the close of the 12-day Earth Summit where some 180 countries met to work out ways to check the decline in the environment without curtailing development.

The Prime Minister said he was disappointed that the rich nations did not seem to change their attitude for a new global partnership with the Third World countries to address the problems of global pollution and environmental degradation.

He said the South countries were still dependent on the North for the technology to develop (without harming the environment) because their capacity to devise such technology was limited.

+But we will keep on pushing (them to change their attitude)+ he added.

Dr Mahathir said the North countries were now thinking of how much profits they could make from the new devices or benefit from the sale of and royalty from the new technology.-- more

▼15/06/11-18MST

Mahathir-Summit 2 Rio de Janeiro

For example, he said, cars must now be fitted with catalytic converter and Malaysia as a developing country need not do so because it was costly.

+But we have decided to do so, which shows much we care about the environment and we have to buy these devices from the North. If we were to manufacture it ourselves, we will have to pay them royalty.

+The North will make a profit out of the environment,+ he added.

On his meeting with Bruno Manser Sunday morning, the Prime Minister said he wanted to know the problems of the Swiss, who had lived with the nomadic Penans in Sarawak and who was championing the cause of the community.

Dr Mahathir said he disagreed with Manser that the Penans should be given the only choice of going back to live in the jungles.

The Penans, he said, should be given two choices: exposure to and experience with life in a settlement and if they did not like it, then the Penans would be allowed to go back to the jungles.-- more

▼15/06/11-27MST

R GE 15-06 00210 EA947

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Mahathir-Summit 3 Rio de Janeiro

+I drew his attention to the black Americans who were dragged from the jungles of Africa to America and after they were freed, they did not choose to go back to the jungles of Africa, + he added.

He said it was not a question of Malaysia's explanation and information on the Penans not reaching the people of the North.

+It is a question of the missionary zeal of the North to tell the South how to do things.....it is a kind of 'white man burden' type of mentality which unfortunately exists today,+ he added.

In summing up Malaysia's attendance at the Summit, he said, it had benefited the country generally and Malaysia had contributed to a better understanding of the issues on environment and development.

In fact, in the last two and a half years of preparations and negotiations leading to the summit, Malaysia had played a prominent role in the texts and resolutions of the conference.

(A Foreign Ministry official had helped draft the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, the legally non-binding principles on forests, the convention on climate and bio-diversity which were adopted at the summit.) -- more

▼15/06/11-33MST

R GE 15-06 00211 EA948

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Mahathir-Summit 4 Rio de Janeiro

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia and the South had resisted the pressure of the North for an international treaty on tropical forest. + We will probably have a convention on forests when all the rich North countries have their forests back,+ he added.

Malaysia and the South countries, he said, had also made known to the North if they were to make use of the South's bio-diversity, they (the North) would have to pay compensation or royalty.

Dr Mahathir said he also met several leaders to discuss ways to enhance bilateral ties and the issues of the Summit. Among them were his counterparts from Sweden, Cooks Island, Pakistan, China, and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz.

On the question of financial commitments from the North which snagged the summit up to the very last minute, he said, the North claimed that the Third World countries had misused the funds provided under the Official Development Assistance (ODA) by them more than 20 years ago.

+If that is so, they can oversee it,+ he said, stressing that the North was only blaming the South (to disguise) their unwillingness to meet their ODA target.-- more

▼15/06/11-44MST

CNS3631

R GE 15-06 00185 EA949

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Mahathir-Summit 5 Rio de Janeiro

Under the UN-sponsored ODA, all the North countries except the US, pledged to set aside 0.7 per cent of the Gross National Product for the ODA to provide soft loans and grants to developing countries to finance their development.

To date, the North had met only 0.35 per cent of their target, with some exceptions.

At the summit, the South countries wanted the North to meet their target by the year 2000 and they had to reach a compromise with the wording on the target which was to be met by the North.

The ODA funds are to go to the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) managed by the World Bank which will be the pilot mechanism to give funds to Third World countries to implement Agenda 21.

Dr Mahathir noted that the North countries have now agreed to open up the membership of the GEF to make it more transparent and democratic, and Malaysia would be a member after getting the consent of the Cabinet.-- more

▼15/06/12-02MST

CNS3636

R GE 15-06 00157 EA950

aae tbe

Mahathir-Summit 6 (last) Rio de Janeiro

Membership fee of the GEF is US\$4 million (M\$10 million) of which US\$2 million is provided by the World Bank to poor countries.

+Everybody should become a member, not because we can afford it but because the GEF should not be exclusively for the North,+ he added.

On the ODA commitments of the rich countries, the Prime Minister said Malaysia received no assistance but loans from the fund.

+But for the sake of the developing countries of the South, we are unhappy (with the commitments),+ he added.

He pointed out that even though the poor countries of the South were to receive assistance from the North through the ODA, they were also the recipient of the carbon dioxide and other green house gases.

Dr Mahathir, who arrived here Thursday, left for home Sunday night.

-- Bernama

▼15/06/12-10MST