

# Mahathir: All countries must be members of GEF

RIO DE JANEIRO. Malaysia will join the Global Environment Facility (GEF) which is poised to become the main source of funding for future environment projects.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said all countries should be members of the GEF in order to increase developing countries' participation and change the fund's present management which is controlled by developed countries.

Although participation in the GEF would be a Cabinet decision, he said Malaysia should join and contribute to democratising the US\$1.3 billion (about \$3.1 billion) fund.

"Every country should join the GEF... it should not be exclusive only to the developed countries," he told reporters.

The question of GEF funding environment projects had been one of the

hotly-debated at the summit as the G-77 and China felt the fund was almost controlled by the World Bank and had failed, so far, to finance appropriate environmental projects.

The developing countries, however, succeeded in committing developed countries to restructure the GEF to include the South in the fund's decision-makings.

It has been estimated developing countries would need about \$125 billion for projects to stave off environmental degradation.

Dr Mahathir also refuted comments by some Northern countries that aid-receiving countries should not dictate the amounts.

He said the South countries were not asked whether they would receive carbon dioxide

emitted by developed countries.

He also said the North should oversee the management of foreign aid if it feared developing countries would misuse the funds, a reason often cited by the North for their refusal to increase aid.

Science, Technology and Environment Minister Law Hieng Ding said the thorny issue of finance, which was finally resolved at the summit, lacked commitment on initial funding and target dates which were sought by developing countries.

Although unsuccessful in getting commitment on a target date to increase aid, the developing countries succeeded in introducing a monitoring mechanism to check on countries which did not meet the official development aid (ODA) of 0.7 per cent of GNP.

S. 16 JUN 1992

oversees helps