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Mahathir-Drug

ROLE OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY VITAL TO DRUG PREVENTION, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 7 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed today underlined the vital role of the family and community in the fight against dadah abuse.

Noting that the scourge was second only to the global trade in arms, he said: +There is no single country or community that has been spared from this scourge. +

Dadah abuse now pervaded every strata of society and its destructive and debilitating effects in terms of loss of lives, opportunity costs, familial disharmony and societal disruptions were all too evident, he added.

In his keynote address at the 14th International Federation of Non-Governmental Organisations (IFNGO) for the Prevention of Drug and Substance Abuse Conference here, he said: +So widespread is the abuse of drugs that there is no way a country can deal with the problem purely on a national basis.

+Only an international effort, carefully coordinated, can be expected to yield tangible results.+ -- more

▼07/12/12-50MST

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The five-day conference is being attended by some 500 experts from 20 countries, among them Bhutan, Canada, Egypt, India, Mauritius, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the United States and the Asean countries -- Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

Dr Mahathir also said that dadah abuse had now become even more dangerous because of its association with the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) where ignorance, reduced will-power and a fatalistic outlook among abusers rendered them much more vulnerable to the deadly disease.

He added: +And so, an extra responsibility is added to those tasked with fighting drug abuse and drug trafficking.

+So serious is the problem that it is not inconceivable for whole communities to be wiped out from the surface of this earth.+

Dadah, he said, recognised no political boundary, no class distinction, no ethnic or racial groups and no religious dogmas while youths in the countryside were just as likely to be involved in dadah-taking as those in the urban centres. -- more

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In other words, no one was beyond its reach unless early steps were taken to prevent its usage and, prevention was all important because experience, had shown that once dadah abuse was indulged in, stopping was almost impossible.

Dr Mahathir said: +Prevention really begins at home, The family is the most important unit in the fight against drug abuse.+

Where the family system had broken down or family influence was not available, the problem of dadah abuse became almost uncontrollable, he added.

He said: +The role of the family is above all to inculcate high moral values which will serve as a built-in defence mechanism against the lure of drug abuse. +

Next to the family was the community since a morally upright community was less prone to the spread of dadah misuse, he added.

+The fight against drug abuse must therefore focus largely on the role of the family and the community, + he said. -- more

▼07/12/13-15MST

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Dr Mahathir said Malaysia did not depend on the severity of its dadah laws alone to combat the drug menace.

Primary prevention programmes were implemented through preventive education in schools and the dissemination of information to the general public aimed at insulating members of society, especially the youths, from the lure of +easy+ money and mental escapism, he added.

+Everyone should be utilised with a sense of responsibility towards themselves and towards society,+ he said.

Dr Mahathir said in Malaysia, drug dependents were perceived as deviants or people with behavioural problems in need of treatment and rehabilitation and the government's response had both the components of treatment as well as sanctions.

While treatment was demanding, difficult and physically and emotionally exhausting, it would not and could not be effective without sanctions, he added. -- more

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He strongly believed that it was in these areas; of prevention and cure that Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) could and should play crucial roles.

Consistent with the theme of the conference, +Together - Strive for a Drug-free Society+, NGOs must collaborate with the government and with each other in order to mobilise every resource towards this end, he said.

He added: +As organisations working closely with the community, NGOs are in a better position to reach out to groups who are more vulnerable and prone to drug abuse.+

It was not enough for NGOs to get together and make recommendations.

+It is incumbent upon them to produce relevant programmes that can be implemented through their own resources,+ he said. --, Bernama

▼07/12/13-21MST