

# Traffickers must pay the penalty, says Dr M

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Malaysia offers no apologies for the mandatory death penalty imposed on **dadah** traffickers as people who want a life of luxury at the expense of other people's misery must be prepared to pay the penalty. **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said today.

The Prime Minister said the death penalty was not just punishment for traffickers but also to served as a reminder to society that it must appreciate the seriousness of the problem and play a role to prevent the emergence of traffickers.

In his keynote address at the 14th International Federation of Non-Governmental Organisations (IFNGO) for the Prevention of Drug and Substance Abuse Conference here, Dr Mahathir said:

"Malaysia is not going to depend on the severity of the law alone to combat the **dadah** menace.

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

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

He stressed the vital role of the family and community in the fight against **dadah** abuse and noted that the scourge was second only to the global trade in arms.

He said there was no country or community that had been spared the **dadah** scourge adding that **dadah** abuse had 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 evi-

## 14TH IFNGO CONFERENCE

International Federation of Non-Governmental Organisations for the Prevention of Drug and Substance Abuse.



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"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 co-ordinated, can be expected to yield tangible results," he said.

The five-day conference is being attended by some 500 experts from 20 countries, including Bhutan, Canada, Egypt, India, Mauritius, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the United States and the Asean countries.

"Prevention really begins at home. The family is the most important unit in the fight against drug abuse. Where the family system has broken down or family influence is not available, the problem of **dadah** abuse has become almost uncontrollable.

"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 - is the community since a morally upright community is less prone to the spread of drug misuse.

"The fight against drug abuse must therefore focus largely on the role of the family and the community," said Dr Mahathir.

The Prime Minister pointed out that **dadah** abuse had 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.

Dr Mahathir said extra responsibility was added to those tasked with fighting drug abuse and drug trafficking since the problem was so serious that it was not inconceivable for whole communities to be wiped out.

He said no one was beyond the reach of **dadah** unless early steps were taken to prevent its usage.

In this context, he said, in the areas of prevention and cure, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) could and should play a crucial role.

He said NGOs should collaborate with the Government and with each other in order to mobilise every resource towards the success of **dadah** eradication programmes.

Meanwhile, Pemadam chairman **Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob** said the theme of this year's conference "Together — Strive for a Drug Free Society" underscored the continuous efforts of the IFNGO in its fight against **dadah** abuse.

He said that Pemadam would continue to work closely with other IFNGO members to ensure a **dadah-free society** for future generations.

**Megat Junid**, who is also Deputy Home Minister and organising chairman of the conference, said **total commitment and hard work** by the members could enable the organisation to fulfil its target of creating a **dadah-free and healthy society**.