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Mahathir-Commission

MAKE WORLD SOLAR PROGRAMME ACTION-ORIENTED, URGES PM

By: K.C.Leong

HARARE, Sept 14 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the programme of activities to be launched by the World Solar Congress here next week should be essentially action-oriented ones.

The Prime Minister was speaking at the inaugural meeting here of the World Solar Commission, set up to provide political leadership and guidance for the implementation of the programme.

He is one of the 16 members of the commission made up of heads of state and government. The commission is chaired by Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and its other members include the presidents of Indonesia, China, India, Pakistan and South Africa.

The two-day summit beginning on Monday will culminate with the signing of the Harare Declaration on Solar Energy and Sustainable Development and the adoption of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 (WSC).

Dr Mahathir said there was no need to be too strictly governed by the need to put into place new, elaborate and highly structured institutional arrangements as a prerequisite to the WSC.

"An obsession for such a practice, often observed as a United Nations mode, sometimes serves to distract us from what begins as a good and noble intention," added the prime minister who described himself as "one who strongly subscribes to the notion that actions speak louder than words".

"Let us not lose our way because of the maze we have unwittingly created, let us not be overwhelmed by the bureaucratic infrastructure and hierarchy we impose on ourselves, let us not be impeded by processes, procedures and formalities of no direct relevance to our purpose.

"Rather, let us begin on a modest scale, involving smaller groupings and utilising institutional or networking arrangements already established and functioning."

Dr Mahathir, who arrived here yesterday, also suggested that caution be applied in selecting only what is best, most appropriate and easily implementable at this early stage.

This was because needs varied among countries while resources, particularly finance, were not always available.

Thus, selectivity and pragmatism became important to ensure that success was seen and felt early in the day in order to spur countries on to higher levels of achievement, he said.

Referring to funding of the proposed activities under the WSC, Dr Mahathir said that with the dropping of an earlier proposal for a World Solar Fund, the need to discuss the issue of funding and possible approaches which might be considered should not be avoided.

While the Harare Declaration commits the participating countries at the summit to work towards the wider use of solar energy and other renewable sources of energy, the WSC is an outline of some 300 top priority renewable energy projects to be implemented at national, regional and international levels over a 10-year period.

Among the aims of the WSC are developing a favourable political, social and economic climate in favour of renewable energy and reinforcing local entrepreneurial capacity-building and creating small-scale financing and delivery mechanism.

Apart from adopting the draft documents of the commission, today's meeting also discussed the statutes of the commission itself as well as the rules of procedures of the summit.

Tonight, Dr Mahathir will attend a dinner given by President Mugabe. --
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