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Malaysia organising telefood to help alleviate world hunger

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The first world telefood aimed at mobilising financial resources through public contribution to alleviate hunger will be organised in conjunction with the World Food Day on Oct 16.

Malaysia will hold its own celebrations with the opening in the headquarters of the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute in Serdang. There will be demonstrations, an exhibition and sale of agricultural products.

Agriculture Minister Datuk Dr Amar Sulaiman Daud said today it was crucial to arouse the public's awareness of the importance of telefood and what the contributions would be used for.

He said the Cabinet recently approved the proposal for Malaysia to organise the telefood with the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations and hoped for the private sector's co-operation.

It had yet to decide the station or channel to hold the telefood.

Each participating country will organise the telefood in its own way and contribute an average of 10 to 15 minutes to the global programme on World-Vision.

Telefood will present reports on world hunger as well as feature the FAO Special Programme for Food Security and other grassroots projects aimed at fighting hunger and malnutrition.

"The funds will be used to help developing countries in need, to help the hungry feed themselves, to take pragmatic action at the grassroots level and build success programmes."

Dr Sulaiman, who was speaking to reporters after receiving a courtesy visit from FAO director-general Dr Jacques Diouf at his office earlier, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was invited to give the keynote address at the World Food Day opening in Rome.

Dr Sulaiman said the FAO had also asked for Malaysia's continued support in efforts to alleviate world hunger and to assist in drainage and irrigation training as well as provide irrigation equipment.

The FAO was also trying to gain the support of the world and regional banks to co-sponsor the event, themed "Investing in Food Security".

Malaysia through Bernas has planted paddy on 320 hectares of land in Guinea.

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