

28/09/1998

`Need for global governance'

Marina Tan

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Worldwide trends are driving home the need for global governance operating in tandem with national sovereignty, a panellist for the "Virtual Commonwealth" dialogue said today.

Dr Chandra Muzaffar, president of the International Movement for a Just World, said problems like volatile capital, environmental pollution and cyber pornography could not be handled effectively by individual countries.

"In economics, for example, there is a stark absence of global governance. Global trade is dominated by 500 multinational companies which handle 70 per cent of it," he said in a telephone interview from London.

"There are no rules to govern how they operate. It is up to the individual country to enact and enforce the rules."

Weaker economies which were desperate for the investment, technology and market offered by the MNCs, Chandra said, were at their mercy unless rules were set up "across the board" to ensure the MNCs did not abuse their hosts.

Global governance could also help preserve national sovereignty, he said, by restricting or punishing any arbitrary aggression.

He said the Virtual Commonwealth dialogue would discuss these issues.

The 90-minute session, to be telecast live over RTM at 9pm on Tuesday, will feature nine panellists.

They include Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, World Bank group vice-president (external and UN affairs) Mark Malloch Brown, UN Conference on Trade and Development secretary-general Rubens Ricupero and the dean of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, Dr Joseph S. Nye.

The moderator will be the UN's 51st General Assembly president Tan Sri Razali Ismail.

More information is available at
<http://streamworks.jaring.my/mma98.html>.

(END)