

# Dr M: Policy on water management necessary

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KUALA LUMPUR: A policy governing the regulation and management of water resources in developing countries should be created, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad proposed yesterday.

He said that while these countries did not obstruct development, they must be careful and skilful in the management of their water resources.

Dr Mahathir said most developing countries were facing water stress including water-rich countries such as Malaysia.

This, he said, was due to the uneven distribution of the population and industries, which resulted in water deficits in more developed and thickly populated areas, while there was excess water in less populated areas.

"We are living in a world where water resources are continuously depleting in terms of quality and quantity. This scenario may well become a source of internal and international conflicts and wars in the future," Dr Mahathir said when launching the International Water Association conference on water and waste water for developing countries at Putra World Trade Centre here.

Dr Mahathir said there may be rivers, lakes and seas but the cost of processing clean water was high.

"The desalination of sea water costs as much as US\$10 (RM38) per 1,000 gallons. Only the rich can afford this," he added.