

Famous personalities to speak at peace forum

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PUTRAJAYA: Several famous faces will speak at a peace forum here to espouse practical ways of achieving harmony.

They include former Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke, British MPs George Galloway and Clare Short, and former UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq Hans-Christof Von Sponeck, who was also a former UN assistant secretary-general.

Galloway and Short gained prominence for being fierce critics of the US-led war on Iraq, with the former unseating an incumbent Labour MP in the British parliamentary elections held earlier this year.

Short quit her Cabinet post in the Labour Government after harshly criticising it for

supporting the war against Iraq.

Asean leaders attending the Asean Summit here at the same time will also be invited to give their views at the Global Peace Forum, organised by the Perdana Leadership Foundation, on Dec 15-17.

The foundation's honorary president, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said the ultimate objective of the forum was to get the participants to "agitate" their governments to pursue peace.

"We want to use the campaign for environment as a model. When the campaign began, it only involved young people who were prepared to do all kinds of things to protect the environment and it became

a kind of movement worldwide.

"Now, environment is so important that there are even political parties based on it.

"Maybe, there will be parties based on peace," he said, adding that the forum also welcomed the participation of environmental activists.

However, the former prime minister stressed that the forum would not be a platform for anyone "to just say nasty things about leaders and to get things off their chest."

"Rather, we want to arouse people to agitate for peace and against war," he said yesterday after launching the forum at the Putrajaya-based foundation yesterday.