

Dr M: NGOs can promote peace

PUTRAJAYA: Non-governmental organisations should help stop wars and promote world peace because they have good international connections and affiliations.

Perdana Leadership Foundation chairman Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said NGOs were the alternatives when governments failed to bring or uphold peace.

"NGOs have lots of affiliations. You need to communicate with the people and educate them on an imminent attack on Iran. This time, nuclear weapons will be used, exposing millions of people - combatants and non-combatants - to radiation and all kinds of disease," he said during a special session entitled *Action Plan For The Global Network For Peace* at the Perdana Global Peace Forum 2006 here yesterday.

He was addressing members

of 67 NGOs who were attending the session.

Panellists of the session were international law and human rights scholar Professor Francis A. Boyle, nuclear expert Dr Helen Caldicott, Ottawa University Prof Michel Chossudovsky and former UN assistant secretary-generals Denis Halliday and Hans-Christof von Sponeck.

Dr Mahathir said war should be made illegal and be criminalised. "Make it a punishable offence," he added.

He said the peace forum would provide guidance on ways to embark on peace missions overseas, mobilising as much manpower as possible to help stop wars from breaking out.

"We will assess the capabilities of the NGOs and their worldwide connections, and help to map out strategies to influence their friends abroad,"