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Abdullah-China

BEIJING ALL SET TO TAKE PART IN ASEAN INFORMAL SUMMIT, SAYS ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, May 19 (Bernama) -- Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who recently concluded a four-day official visit to China, said Beijing is actively preparing for the second Asean informal summit to be held here in December.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in his capacity as the chairman of the summit, would be extending the official invitation to China, Japan and South Korea shortly.

Also known as the "Commemorative Summit" in view of Asean's 30th anniversary this year, the informal meeting will see for the first time the gathering of the heads of state/ government from the seven Asean countries and Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar (the three prospective members of the regional grouping) as well as China, Japan and South Korea.

"I very much welcome that the government of China is actively preparing for the summit," Abdullah said in a statement issued by Wisma Putra, here, today.

The foreign minister said he believed the summit would be able to provide further impetus to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and bring regional cooperation to greater heights.

On his visit to China, which was also in his capacity as chairman of the Asean Standing Committee, Abdullah said that based on his talks with Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, Malaysia-China relations were "very good".

He said bilateral ties had considerable prospect of being strengthened further through more cooperation in air services, tourism, culture and education, trade and investment.

Describing his visit as extremely useful and successful, Abdullah said both Malaysia and China welcomed the development of more tripartite ventures, especially in developing countries where opportunities for such private sector cooperation were considerable.

During his trip to China, which began in Shanghai, Abdullah also called on President Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng.

He said the objective of his trip was to exchange views with his counterpart on bilateral relations, get an update on China's economic reform and explore the possibilities for more economic and business ties and to promote further Asean-China cooperation.

On the development of the Asia-Pacific region, he said both countries shared the view that it was very important for China to succeed in its economic modernisation.

He said Malaysia welcomed the considerable progress that China had made in its economic reform and reiterated that such a development would greatly contribute to peace and stability, particularly in the region.

Abdullah said he also renewed Dr Mahathir's invitation to Li Peng to visit Malaysia while the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Tuanku Ja'afar, would be visiting China in July this year. --BERNAMA

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