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Bonn proposes signing cultural pact

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GERMANY has proposed to sign a cultural agreement with Malaysia to complement bilateral ties in economic, science and technology and other fields, says Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Germany is also seeking Malaysia's help to develop its Muslim community, he told reporters after a 45-minute meeting with visiting Germany Deputy Chancellor and Foreign Minister Dr Klaus Kinkel in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

"The cultural agreement is to be seen as an expanded relations. Both sides agreed that the relations must not be confined to economic only," he said, adding that details of the agreement will be discussed.

Abdullah said he and Kinkel agreed that the new agreement will add to other cooperation in various fields, notably in transfer of technology, education and technical training.

On Islam, Abdullah said he informed the German minister that Ikim, the country's institute on Islamic understanding, will be more than happy to give assistance to the country.

On Myanmar, Kinkel expressed confidence that Myanmar's future membership in Association of South-East Asian Nations (Asean) will bring about prosperity, political stability and democracy in the country.

Abdullah said the meeting also discussed the Spratly issue as Kinkel wanted to know more about the development of the disputed atoll.

On Germany's bid to become the permanent member of the United Nations (UN) Security Council, the Foreign Minister said Malaysia is not ready to be involved in a specific talks on the issue.

"Japan also wants a permanent chair in the Security Council.

"In his address to the UN about four years ago, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had mentioned this ... and I think my decision must come in a package of concensus."

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