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DON'T BE TO QUICK TO MAKE FINAL ASSESSMENT ON FLOTATION OF ASEAN CURRENCIES

BANGI, Aug 25 (Bernama) -- Indonesian's Finance Minister Mar'ie Muhammad said today it would not be fair to make an absolute or final assessment on the flotation of certain currencies in Asean as the "exercise" is still at an early stage.

The Philipines, Thailand and Indonesia had already floated their peso, baht and rupiah respectively following speculative attacks on the region's currencies recently.

"The flotation of the currencies in these countries was introduced about two months ago, so please don't make a final assessment yet," he told reporters after delivering a paper, "Development: What and For Whom" at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia here.

On the flotation of currencies, Mar'ie said Asean should look at the flotation from the positive and negative point of view because there were matters which could not be anticipated and that the system was also new.

Commenting on a recent meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, he said the currency crisis affecting South East Asian countries was among the issues discussed.

In addition, he also discussed with Dr Mahathir for the establishment of more streamlined co-operation, especially in finance, which include finance ministers and central bank governors.

Mar'ie added, "We already have a forum for this, so there is no need for a new forum."

He said these could be raised at the forum where Asean finance ministers would meet their European counterparts in Bangkok on Sept 19.

Another forum would be at the annual World Bank and International Monetary Fund meetings in Hong Kong from Sept 20.

He said as usual finance ministers and governors of central banks in Asean would meet the Japanese finance minister and officials from the Asian Development Bank and World Bank.

There were also plans from the Asean side to meet the US Treasury Secretary. "Maybe there would be a meeting between the Asean side and IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus," he added. -- BERNAMA

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