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Abdullah-Success

MALAYSIA CONFIDENT D-8 WILL SUCCEED, SAYS MINISTER

By: Mokhtar Hussain

ISTANBUL, June 13 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is confident that the new Group of Eight Islamic Developing Countries (D-8) will succeed, and on its part is prepared to share its experience with the other members in areas where it has achieved success.

Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Malaysia will ignore negative views expressed by anyone on the establishment of the D-8 which holds its inaugural summit here on Sunday.

"We will not have any hesitation in helping the other countries," he told Malaysian journalists here today.

Apart from Malaysia, the D-8 consists of Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran, Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan dan Turkey.

Malaysia will be represented at the summit by Prime Minister Menteri Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Abdullah said although Malaysia has been asked to prepare a working paper on privatisation and Islamic banking and insurance, it is also willing to offer assistance in other fields in which it has achieved success.

They include areas like poverty eradication and mobilisation of people's investments, where Malaysia has achieved success and is prepared to transfer its expertise to other developing countries, he said.

On the allegation that the D-8 was formed to serve as a political platform for a certain party in Turkey, Abdullah said Malaysia does not believe that and has full confidence in the noble aims of the group.

"This is a good cooperation, and can bring much benefit to developing countries. From the outset, there is no question of D-8 being made a political platform," he said.

The idea to establish the D-8 was mooted by Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan to bring about economic cooperation among a small group of countries so that it can be stronger and more effective.

However, the opposition in Turkey have criticised the coalition government headed by Erbakan for proposing the D-8 and organising the inaugural summit, saying it is political ploy to garner support and strengthen the government's position.

On the possibility of enlarging the membership of D-8 to other Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) countries, Abdullah said the matter would be discussed at Sunday's summit.

He added, however, that the other OIC countries could form similar groups if they were interested. -- BERNAMA

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