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OIC leaders likely to adopt vision statement

Lokman Mansor in Teheran

TEHERAN, Mon: A special document, outlining the vision for Muslim countries and their people, will be presented to the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Summit, which begins tomorrow.

The statement, which was discussed by the OIC foreign ministers during their final session of the preparatory meeting yesterday, is expected to contain principles and approaches to be adopted by the 55-member countries in dealing with future challenges and problems.

The ministers had held an open brainstorming session on what they hoped to see for Muslims in the next century, and felt that a special document on their discussions should be drafted.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said his Indonesian counterpart Ali Alatas told the session that Malaysia was already drafting a vision statement on the future of the Muslim ummah.

"We got the views of many foreign ministers present at the OIC, and they supported the move. We will work closely with the host, Iran, to finalise the statement before it is presented to the summit," he told Malaysian journalists here yesterday.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived here today to attend the three-day summit, which is the last to be held in this millennium.

While stressing the need for Muslims to prosper and live in peace and stability, the statement is also expected to commit OIC members to a policy of non-interference and anti-terrorism.

"We stated our hope that problems faced can be resolved through peaceful negotiation, without resorting to aggression or military force," Abdullah said.

It is stressed that any interference in the domestic matters of any OIC member country is unacceptable under any circumstances. "Don't interfere. This is the right and freedom of the country."

Abdullah said cooperation among OIC members must also be enhanced to ensure sustainable economic development, protection of the environment, and the curbing of aggression and trafficking of drugs.

"I am sure that when it is ready, this will be a very significant document, because it contains principles which are important for Muslims today and in the future," he said, adding that while not legally binding, OIC members will be morally bound to the spirit and letter of the document.

Abdullah said the two-day discussions among the foreign ministers were held in a cordial atmosphere.

"We were particularly pleased when two resolutions, which we felt might be difficult to resolve, were eventually agreed to by the OIC Arab countries concerned," he said.

The first addresses the encroachment by Turkish forces in northern Iraq. It calls for respect for the sovereignty of Iraq and consequently the withdrawal of Turkish troops.

The second states that military cooperation between Turkey and Israel is against the policy of the OIC.

As for Malaysia's move to have OIC deliberate on problems related to currency speculation, Abdullah said three paragraphs on the matter will be included in the summit's communique, and not in the Teheran Declaration, as the latter would only provide the issue a passing mention.

The paragraphs are expected to note the OIC's concern over the financial market turbulence which has exerted pressure on the economies and financial systems of several countries, including OIC members.

The need to understand the dynamics of globalised capital and currency markets is also expected to be stressed, as well as efforts to examine the structure of global financial system and the implications of large short-term capital flows and various market operations.

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