

16 DEC 1997

Annan-Asean

UN CHIEF SAYS NO COUNTRY CAN RESOLVE GLOBAL PROBLEM ON ITS OWN

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 16 (Bernama) -- No single nation, no matter how powerful or rich in resources, could address the problems in the world today on its own, said United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

This is because the problems now were too complex and interdependent, he said at a dinner talk organised by the Institute for Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IFDR) here tonight.

"In a world of global threats and global opportunities, all countries stand to benefit from international cooperation. And no country is exempt from the risks of doing without it," said Annan, who is on the third of his four-day visit to Malaysia.

Commending Malaysia for being a strong advocate of regional and international cooperation, he said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's often used term of "Prosper thy neighbour" is more than a slogan.

"It is a practical approach that reflects an understanding that more and more aspects of contemporary life transcends borders," he said. Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was present.

He said the UN needed to develop strategic alliances with regional organisations such as Asean to address global issues such as environment, population, human rights, trade and development.

He noted that Asean leaders had declared at the fifth Asean Summit in Bangkok in 1995 to explore ways to enhance cooperation with the United Nations with a view to promote peace and stability in the region.

Annan said he was eager to explore how the UN and Asean could broaden and deepen the scope of their relations.

"In doing so we can strengthen multilateralism in an age which demands it in ever greater measure and force," he said.

The UN chief said he was happy to be visiting Malaysia, which he described as a good friend and partner of the UN, at a time when the country was hosting the 30th anniversary of Asean.

On Cambodia, Annan said he regretted that peace and democracy had proven so fragile that those developments had led to the postponement of Cambodia's entry into Asean.

He hoped that ongoing efforts by the UN and Asean would help improve the situation in Cambodia for the sake of all Cambodians and enable the country to be admitted into Asean in due course. -- BERNAMA

AZZ RM