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UN hopes to maintain strong rapport with KL

Kamarul Yunus

UNITED Nations (UN) secretary-general Kofi Annan, affirming Malaysia's important role in the world organisation, hopes to maintain strong rapport between it and Malaysia as well as with other members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (Asean).

"Malaysia is a strong supporter of the UN. Thus, it is useful for me to stay in touch with member states which play an important role in the UN," he told reporters after attending a lunch hosted by the UN Malaysia Association (Unma) in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Annan, who arrived in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday, said his four-day visit to Malaysia is primarily aimed at forging a strong relationship and cooperation between the UN and Malaysia and other Asean countries.

Asked about specific subjects for discussion with Asean leaders, Annan said he hopes to discuss economic problems faced by countries in the region, and try to forge closer relations and cooperation.

He also said he is happy and encouraged by his meeting with Unma members, and added that the association plays a very important role.

"These associations are very important to the organisation. They are held at the grassroots level and understand what we (the UN) are doing as well as maintain our support at that level," he said.

Meanwhile, as the UN reform package is nearing approval, the discussions for the reform of the Security Council is not progressing well.

Annan told Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that countries participating in the discussions for the reform of the Security Council have strong national positions and as such, it is difficult for a forward movement in the process.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Annan had briefed Dr Mahathir on the UN reform package and those relating to the Security Council.

Annan also invited Dr Mahathir to the UN millennium assembly and the special meeting on the human rights in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the Human Rights Convention.

Abdullah, when asked if Annan had raised Malaysia's call for a review of the Human Rights Charter, said Annan told Dr Mahathir that it would be difficult to do so.

"If the human rights charter is reviewed, there will be many problems. The major problem would be the implementation process," he said.

Abdullah said Malaysia will not back out from what it wants to achieve even if countries are not for the review of the charter.

Bernama reports: Multimedia Development Corporation (MDC) raised with the secretary-general of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, several cross-border issues pertaining to the development of a global information infrastructure.

MDC hopes that some kind of global effort will be taken to address the issues which needed immediate international attention in view of the fact that the world is moving fast towards the information age and electronic trade.

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