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APEC-NEWS-MAHATHIR (EMERGENCY)

APEC MUST COOPERATE IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY- DR MAHATHIR

By: E.Sivabalan

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 13 (Bernama) -- Malaysia wants Apec to strengthen its capability to respond, act and implement the various initiatives and mechanisms that it has developed in light of emergencies faced by the affected economies.

In making the call, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said cooperation especially from the more advanced economies was crucial.

As a result of natural disasters in the Asia-Pacific region, over 200,000 deaths and over US\$5 billion in material damages occurred since 1990, he said when opening the Apec International Trade Fair at the Mines Exhibition Centre here.

The four-day exhibition coincides with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) forum from Nov 12-18, a high-profile meeting featuring senior officials, ministers and leaders of 21 member economies.

Dr Mahathir said in addition to the theme of the exhibition "Enhancing Global Competitiveness Through Technology and Human Resource Development", the fair also adopted "Emergency Preparedness in Apec" as its sub-theme.

"Using this theme, the fair promotes capacity building in the area of emergency preparedness among member economies," the Prime Minister said.

He said from Malaysia's experience, last year's haze which originated from forest fires adversely affected the country's tourism industry and the health of its people.

"We have also heard this year about floods in Peru, Papua New Guinea and China and typhoons in the Philippines, Chinese Taipei and the United States with tremendous effects on the economies," he said.

Apec comprises Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and the United States.

Russia, Peru and Vietnam will join Apec at this summit.

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