

03 MAR 1998

Britain-Economy

BRITAIN COMMITTED TO HELPING ASIA OVERCOME ECONOMIC CRISIS

KUALA LUMPUR, March 3 (Bernama) -- Britain and Europe will continue to be engaged with Asia in its efforts to overcome the current economic crisis, British Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Derek Fatchett said today.

In a statement issued in London before leaving for Kuala Lumpur, Fatchett said he wanted to discuss with Malaysian leaders the economic issue and how it could be taken forward at next month's Second Asia-Europe (Asem) meeting in the British capital.

He hopes to meet Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"I am keen to demonstrate that Britain and the rest of Europe will continue to be engaged with Asia. We are strongly committed to assist in resolving the current economic and financial difficulties in the region," he said in the statement, a copy of which was made available to Bernama through the British High Commission.

Several Asian economies have been mired in financial and economic problems stemming from the sharp devaluation of their currencies against the US dollar.

Fatchett will be coming as the personal emissary of British Prime Minister Tony Blair and the special representative of the European Union (EU) Presidency.

He is expected to report personally to EU foreign ministers on the outcome of his discussions with Dr Mahathir and Malaysian ministers.

Fatchett will also visit Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand. -- BERNAMA
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