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NAM to push for restructuring of Security Council

Syed Nadzri in Durban

THE Non-Aligned Movement is pursuing efforts to push for the restructuring of the United Nations, especially the Security Council make-up, which tilts too much in favour of the superpowers.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the current NAM meeting here, which started at ministerial level yesterday, was expected to come up with some decisions on this.

But, he added, the 113 members of NAM must, among themselves, disregard their narrow regional or parochial interests to achieve their objective.

Speaking to Malaysian journalists on Sunday night, Abdullah said NAM had always wanted the UN Security Council to be expanded to include countries from the South as permanent members.

The Security Council now has five permanent members - the United States, Britain, China, France and Russia - each carrying veto power.

Abdullah said NAM had all the opportunities to prove that it was no talk-shop with the kind of pressure that it could apply on the UN.

"Our members may not be big economic or military powers, but it must be remembered that we have 113 countries in our ranks," he added.

It is understood that the Durban meeting will come up with a firm proposal on the matter and the question now is whether the proposal will be for the Security Council to be represented according to regions or whether the permanent members should be rotated among countries.

Abdullah also reiterated Malaysia's stand on terrorism, another issue which is expected to feature prominently in Durban.

"Our stand is clear and consistent - we are opposed to terrorism in any form. But terrorism must be differentiated from fights for national freedom," he added.

Abdullah also said he would do his best to represent Malaysia when the summit proper starts tomorrow in the absence of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Dr Mahathir decided not to attend as he had to remain in Malaysia to look into some domestic affairs.

Abdullah said he would personally convey the Prime Minister's regret to South African President Nelson Mandela when he gets the opportunity.

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