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Malaysia-Retakaful

M'SIA'S PUSH FOR RETAKAFUL TO BE INCLUDED IN DHAKA DECLARATION

By: Mikhail Raj Abdullah

DHAKA, Feb 27 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's success in Islamic reinsurance or retakaful has received a resounding endorsement by the Group of Eight Islamic developing countries (D-8).

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said Malaysia's proposal for member countries to jointly participate in its highly successful retakaful insurance firm would be included in the Dhaka Declaration of the D-8.

He said their private sectors have been urged to take up equity in Asean Re-takaful (L) Ltd, the Islamic reinsurance company based in the off-shore financial centre of Labuan.

Currently, besides Malaysia holding majority interest, Singaporean and Indonesian parties also have a shareholding in the Islamic reinsurer established in May 1997, he told Bernama today.

He said this after the two-day commissioners' meeting which is preparing the draft declaration as well as the agenda for the D-8 leaders' summit beginning Monday.

The declaration which is expected to delve into a host of other matters is expected to be issued after the summit.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will arrive Sunday to attend the summit of this project-oriented group which is an offshoot of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) countries.

The D-8 comprises Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan Turkey and host Bangladesh.

Syed Hamid said that Malaysia had offered to host a working group meeting on retakaful, aimed at discussing the modus operandi and business arrangements on retakaful in June this year in Kuala Lumpur.

"We hope to encourage D-8 and other Islamic nations to participate in retakaful which holds immense potential given the projected increased in trade and investment between Islamic countries."

He said that Malaysia was also prepared to offer consultancy services, attachment programmes and other forms of training to member countries in takaful operations as well as in Islamic banking.

Islamic finance and banking was the project identified and assigned for Malaysia to coordinate at the D-8's first summit in Istanbul in June 1997.

Syed Hamid also said that the commissioners' meeting which ended today decided that the summit would be held every two years instead of annually.

This means that the next gathering of leaders would be held in Cairo in 2001.

However, he said senior officials would meet more regularly while foreign ministers would hold meetings at the summit as well as an informal meeting when they converge for the annual United Nations general assembly in New York.

Turning to trade and investment facilitation, another priority area identified by the D-8 in 1997, he said Malaysia would host a seminar for customs officials of member countries possibly by the end of the year.

All this clearly showed that the D-8 was living up to its name as an organisation set on undertaking manageable projects for mutual economic benefit, he said.

"Definitely, the Dhaka Declaration clearly has to show how much needed to be done in order to attain the objectives of our group," he said, adding that, "at all times, we need to ensure that are very focussed on projects

and activities that can be implemented."

H said there was also a need to enhance networking among Islamic countries and reinforce themselves to participate effectively in the global economy.

"There is a need for Muslim countries to rethink what they can do in order to be able to help each other," he said.

--BERNAMA

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