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Discuss code of conduct at Asean meet, says China

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - China hopes a code of conduct would be drawn up for claimants to the Spratly Islands during its meeting with Asean members in Manila next week.

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Zhu Bangzao said the "10+1" meeting, comprising the 10 Asean members and China, should take the opportunity to formulate the code of conduct.

"China regards the code of conduct as an important document and it should not be formulated hastily," Zhu told reporters.

Zhu said China was willing to work closely with Asean to formulate the document.

He also hoped that claimants would hold consultations to look into common issues.

Last month, Philippine Defence Secretary Orlando Mercado proposed a code of conduct for claimants to the islands, namely, Malaysia, China, Vietnam, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan.

Meanwhile, Zhu said Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who met this morning, also discussed China's import of Malaysian crude palm oil.

"Zhu told Dr Mahathir that China's import quota would remain at last year's level," he said.

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