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Law-Conference

MUSA AND NIGERIAN NOBEL LAUREATE TO SPEAK AT LAW CONFERENCE

KUALA LUMPUR, July 23 (Bernama) -- Former deputy prime minister Tan Sri Musa Hitam and Nigeria's Nobel laureate and human rights activist Wole Soyinka will be among the 160 speakers and paper presenters at the 12th Commonwealth Law Conference to be held in Petaling Jaya on Sept 13-16.

Bar Council president R.R. Chelvarajah said today Musa, the former United Nations Human Rights Commission chairman, would speak on the "Harare Declaration" while Soyinka would talk on "Democracy, Freedom and the Individual".

Other prominent speakers are Lord Woolf, England's Master of the Rolls and pioneering civil litigation reformer, and India's Fali Nariman, a leading advocate who handled the Bhopal case.

Chelvarajah told a news conference here that Clive Nicholls, who is currently defending former Chilean president General Augusto Pinochet in England, and India's Attorney-General Soli Sorabjee would also speak at the conference.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would open the conference and was also expected to host a dinner for the participants on the opening day.

"The prime minister's acceptance shows the government's endorsement and cooperation to this conference which will certainly bring prestige to the country," he said.

He said the conference would be one of the largest events involving people in the law fraternity, drawing together more than 1,000 lawyers, judges, chief justices, attorneys-general and law ministers from about 30 countries.

So far, 12 chief justices and five attorneys-general had confirmed their participation while the speakers would comprise 29 from the United Kingdom, Australia (nine), India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh (14 each), Caribbean Islands (nine), Singapore (18), Canada (six), Africa (16) and Malaysia (40).

Among the Malaysian speakers is Member of Parliament and well-known criminal lawyer Karpal Singh who will speak on the "Death Penalty".

Asked whether the events in the country in the past six months had affected the number of foreign participants, Chelvarajah said they did receive queries from overseas law associations.

"There were a lot of clips on street demonstrations here going worldwide. But we have assured them that there are no street riots now and KL is a safe place to visit," he said.

Although there are no specific topics on the Malaysian law during the conference, Chelvarajah said it could be brought up during discussions on law in general.

Among topics to be discussed are environment, human rights, AIDS and the law, corporate governance and legal profession in the 21st century.

Besides that, there would also be satellite meetings, including the Commonwealth Chief Justices' meeting, Commonwealth Law Reform Agencies' meeting and Young Lawyers Association meeting.

Malaysian is the third Asian country, after India and Hong Kong, to host the event.

-- BERNAMA

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