

09 MAR 2000

Mahathir-Abdurrahman

M'SIA AND INDONESIA TEAM UP TO FACE GLOBALISATION

By: Syed Jamil Jaafar and Openg Onn

JAKARTA, March 9 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Indonesia have agreed to engage in sustained talks to enable them come up with a common stand on globalisation.

This was agreed upon by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and President Abdurrahman Wahid during their meeting at Istana Merdeka here today.

Speaking at a joint media conference later, Dr Mahathir said they discussed, among other things, the effects of globalisation on developing countries like Malaysia and Indonesia.

"We agree that both countries hold talks towards adopting a common stand to be forward at international fora," said Dr Mahathir.

As a Third World leader well-known for consistently highlighting concerns over globalisation's negative effects on developing countries, Dr Mahathir has often raised the need for these countries to be allowed to give own definition of globalisation.

Malaysia and Indonesia, for instance, have just emerged from a chronic economic crisis and when asked about the lesson learnt from the experience, he said: "The world is not a very friendly place."

In their talks, followed by a full delegation meeting, Dr Mahathir and Abdurrahman also discussed, among others:

- * increased Malaysian participation in Indonesia's economic recovery by way of enlarged investments;

- * more landing rights for MAS in Indonesia and a MAS-Garuda code-sharing arrangement;

- * increased shipping between Tanjung Periok here and Port Klang;

- * a tripartite collaboration to establish a financial centre in Brunei Darussalam involving the Sultanate, Malaysia and Indonesia; and

- * the feasibility of building a land route to Indonesia through Brunei.

Dr Mahathir said Indonesia was also keen in sharing Malaysia's experience in poverty-eradication efforts and equitable distribution of wealth among citizens.

The prime minister, who arrived here this morning for an overnight trip, said Malaysia's foreign policy, which put first the close ties with Indonesia, would remain so, regardless of a change of government in Indonesia.

"As for Malaysia, close ties with Indonesia is uppermost," said Dr Mahathir.

Abdurrahman said Indonesia wanted to learn from Malaysia, ways of tackling the economic crisis without relying on assistance from international agencies.

He also said his government would want to share Malaysia's 20-year experience in carrying out the New Economic Policy which had brought about a more equitable economic development.

On current Sumatera forest fires causing haze hazards and threatening neighbouring countries, Abdurrahman said his cabinet discussed the matter at its last meeting.

Firm measures were being taken to deal with the situation, he added.

-- BERNAMA

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