

30 JUNE 2000

OIC-Bilateral

SYED HAMID HOLDS TALKS WITH COUNTERPARTS FROM ISLAMIC COUNTRIES

KUALA LUMPUR, June 30 (Bernama) -- Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar held bilateral talks with his counterparts and representatives from several countries on the fringes of the 27th session of Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) here today.

The countries included Uganda, Guinea, Qatar, Libya and Bosnia and Herzegovina which has observer status in the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

Their discussions touched on the state of bilateral relations and the need to forge greater unity among Muslim countries to face future challenges.

Ugandan Foreign Minister Alfred Mubanda said his country was interested in learning more about economic planning from Malaysia and how it went about promoting industrialisation.

He said both sides would be discussing details about the subject later.

Guinea's Foreign Minister Mahawa Bangoura Camara expressed satisfaction on the level of cooperation between Conakry and Kuala Lumpur especially in the context of South-South relations.

However, she said that there was a need to enhance this.

She said partnership between Malaysia and her country had been forged, among others, in the fields of telecommunications and agriculture.

On the OIC, she said solidarity among Islamic states was important if they wished to improve the well-being of the Muslim ummah.

Libya's Secretary-General of Political Affairs, Saad Mustafa Mujber said thanks to Malaysia's leadership, participants of the ICFM had reached consensus on every issue despite many people's prediction that those matters would divide them.

"We showed unity and will by cooperating in many fields. We hope the conference is going to be a turning point for the Islamic world from today onwards," he added.

Qatar state minister Ahmad Abdulla Al-Mahmood said the time had come for the OIC to move forward and to rapidly turn its words into action.

He also commended Malaysia on its wisdom in handling the selection of the new OIC secretary-general.

Morocco's former foreign minister Dr Abdelouhed Belkziz was yesterday named to succeed his countryman, Dr Azeddine Laraki who will be at the helm of the 56-member grouping of Islamic countries from Jan 1.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's Deputy Foreign Minister Husein Zivalj said he took the opportunity of his stay here to explain to Syed Hamid the latest situation in his country which had suffered years of civil strife.

He said only eight per cent of Bosnian Muslims had returned to their homeland after fleeing their country at the height of the war.

"This is totally unacceptable," he said.

Husein also praised Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his opening speech in which he had called for greater unity among the Muslim ummah.

The four-day ICFM ends today.

-- BERNAMA

MAD/NZ/MAM AAM