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Asean-Bolkiah (Terrorism)

ASEAN AGREES TO WORK ON REGIONAL CONVENTION OR AGREEMENT ON TERRORISM

By: David Chelliah

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Nov 5 (Bernama) -- Asean leaders today agreed to work on the proposal on regional operational convention or agreement to combat terrorism, including its definition and root causes.

Chairman of the Seventh Asean Leader's Summit Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei said terrorism should be combated in a comprehensive manner incorporating multilateral seminars on emergency response to terrorist threats and looking into bilateral legal assistance agreement to enhance cooperation.

In the chairman's statement at the end of the first day of the summit here, he said the Asean leaders had instructed the Special Asean Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime in Kuala Lumpur next April to study these proposals.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had made a strong stand at the summit here on Malaysia's consistent policy for an international conference on terrorism and to find out the root causes of terrorism.

Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah also reiterated Asean's condemnation of the terrorist attacks on the United States on Sept 11 and expressed concern for the welfare of innocent people as a result of US air strikes on Afghanistan.

He said Asean was committed to countering, preventing and suppressing all terrorist acts in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

On the Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the adoption of the second phase of Asean Work Programme on HIV/AIDS, he said it was Asean's new political will and support for national, regional and international efforts.

He said Asean also agreed to invite Japan, China and South Korea, Asean's dialogue partners, and other international agencies to support the work programme.

Asean must lobby for issues of common concern such as access to cheaper drugs for the millions of people who could not afford such treatment, he added.

About 1.7 million people in the Asean countries are infected with HIV.

Asean consists of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

-- BERNAMA

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