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Syed Hamid-Asean

ASEAN RELATIONS NOT INFLUENCED BY MEDIA REPORTS- SYED HAMID

KUALA LUMPUR, May 2 (Bernama) -- Asean Foreign Ministers have agreed that relations among the 10 members of the grouping should not be influenced by media reports which at times can cause misunderstanding and tension.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today they agreed to have direct contact to get the actual picture of any issue or problem that arose.

"We agreed not to rely entirely on media reports to arrive at any conclusion...our relations should not be based on knee-jerk reaction but rather on the strong ties existing among us," he said.

He was speaking to reporters after talks with visiting Equatorial Guinea's Minister of Mines and Energy Cristobal Menana Ela at Wisma Putra here.

Syed Hamid said this when asked about the outcome of the Asean Foreign Ministers informal meeting which ended in Yangon, Myanmar yesterday.

The Asean Foreign Ministers also agreed that the "open agenda meetings" should become the norm to enable various topics to be discussed with a view to bringing about greater Asean integration in the political, economic and social fields, he said.

Describing the meeting as productive, Syed Hamid said they had the opportunity to update their knowledge of the situation in Asean countries and understand their respective stands on political issues and matters pertaining to regional peace and stability.

He said the Asean Foreign Ministers also expressed the hope that Myanmar would find a solution to its political problem based on its own mould free of interference from any outside party.

"We also discussed the need for us to hold to the concept of the consensus process and not get involved in the internal affairs of Asean member states," he said.

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

Syed Hamid also said the meeting resolved that an integrated effort be made to overcome the narcotics menace, considered a serious regional problem, in line with the Asean aspiration to become free of the scourge by 2015.

He said Myanmar explained that it was making efforts to replacing coca cultivation with other crops with a view to clearing the country of coca which was processed into drugs.

The Foreign Ministers also discussed preparations for the upcoming Asean summit in Brunei and the Asean Foreign Ministers meeting in Hanoi.

Syed Hamid said he was also briefed on the latest situation in Indonesia by its Foreign Minister Alwi Shihab.

Indonesia sought Malaysia's understanding of the problems it was going through and gave an assurance that it would continue to consider its relations with Malaysia as of vital importance, he added.

On his talks with the Equatorial Guinea Minister, Syed Hamid said Ela extended a letter from her government inviting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to visit the South American nation.

-- BERNAMA

MAM AHH AAM