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Press-Assembly

ASIA'S HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF MINDS TO BE HELD HERE NEXT YEAR

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 10 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will host the "One Asia Assembly" next year which will highlight the role of women in Asia and how the continent will react to the global changes before and after the Sept 11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

To broaden the scope of thinking about Asia, the Press Foundation of Asia, through its Malaysian chapter, will assemble a high-level meeting that will draw personalities from different disciplines to discuss the future of Asia.

The event's organising committee chief executive, Datuk Abdul Kadir Jasin, said today the theme of the gathering, "Society, Governance and the New Realities", was relevant as Asia was not only a political force but also an economic force to be reckoned with.

International luminaries and Asian women leaders would be invited to speak on several issues, he told a media conference here.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is expected to open the assembly to be held from Aug 12 to 14. It is the fifth assembly to be organised by the foundation since the first edition in Manila in 1970.

Abdul Kadir said the organisers hoped that Asian women leaders such as Myanmar's Aung San Su Ky, Philippine President Gloria Arroyo, Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri, President Chandrika Kumaratunga of Sri Lanka and former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto would attend the assembly.

"We are making attempts through the embassies and high commissions to have these leaders present and if that is not possible, then a live satellite broadcast feed featuring them will be done during the assembly," he said.

In the past, it was a tradition for the host country's head of state as well as the incumbent United Nations secretary-general to inaugurate the assembly, he said, adding that they hoped to have UN chief Kofi Annan present.

Abdul Kadir, who is a member of the foundation's board of directors, said other topics likely to crop up during the assembly would be the role of the media in Asia, terrorism and extremism.

Meanwhile, co-chairman of the organising committee Tan Sri Razali Ismail said the assembly was an important watershed event for Malaysia as new realities would be discussed in the context of globalisation.

Razali, the UN special envoy to Myanmar, said the theme covered all areas including inconsistencies in Asian politics and governance.

Foundation chairman Datuk Mazlan Nordin said Malaysia faced a daunting task of putting together an event of this magnitude and expressed confidence that it would be a success.

About 500 participants are expected for the assembly.

Apart from the inaugural assembly in Manila, the other editions were held in Bali (1971), New Delhi (1973) and the last one in Manila in 1990.

-- BERNAMA

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