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Mahathir-G15

MAHATHIR HAPPY G15 IS NOW STRONG

By: Mohamed Kamel Othman

JAKARTA, May 31 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he is happy that the Group of 15 Developing Nations (G15) has now emerged as a strong organisation.

He said the G15 was now able to make presentations and protest against decisions of the developed countries that affect the developing nations.

"There is growing interest in the G15 among developing countries," he said at a media conference after the conclusion of the G15's 11th Summit at the Jakarta Convention Centre here today.

Dr Mahathir said many other countries wanted to join the grouping because they felt that the G15 has the ability to air the grievances of the developing countries.

"At the moment, there is no way we can voice our views of decisions made by the G7 or G8 which affect developing countries adversely.

"We have no way to give our views and therefore, G15 has become a strong organisation that makes it possible for us to make our presentation, protest or express different views on matters like the World Trade Organisation (WTO)," the prime minister said.

Dr Mahathir was among seven heads of state or government who attended the summit meeting chaired by Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid.

The prime minister said member countries were determined to see progress in the grouping.

"We are determined to make G15 more effective. In between the meetings, we felt that there is a need to have a coordinating agency," he said.

When asked whether Malaysia consider the summit's acceptance of its proposal for a panel of expert to study possible reforms to the international financial architecture a success for Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said: "I don't know whether you can call it a success or not.

"I think it is a suggestion very well received by everybody because everybody thinks that we should have such a study by the experts," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he was satisfied with the outcome of the summit.

"You can see that every member country is serious and determined to play their role effectively in negotiations which affects the developing countries and their relationship with developed nations," he said.

Established in 1989, the G15 consists of Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

Venezuela will host the next summit in Caracas.

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