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Summit-Malaysia

MALAYSIA SAYS D-8 SUCCESS DEPENDS ON COMMITMENT OF MEMBERS

By: Abdul Muin Majid

CAIRO, Feb 22 (Bernama) -- Malaysia believes that the success of the Group of Eight Islamic Developing Countries (D-8) depends much on the commitment and the level of participation of its members, Foreign Ministry Deputy Secretary General 1, Datuk Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak said here Thursday.

In order for D-8 to be continuously active, member countries should come out with proposals or programmes that could be implemented by all parties involved, he said speaking to Malaysian reporters who are here to cover the third summit of the D-8 heads of state and government scheduled on Sunday.

Ahmad Fuzi said apart from Malaysia's contribution in conducting training programmes on financial matters and privatisation, Kuala Lumpur felt that it could impart knowledge in other areas as well that could benefit fellow members.

Malaysia will be represented at the summit by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who is arriving in the Egyptian capital on Saturday.

Ahmad Fuzi, who earlier participated in the 10th Session of the D-8 commission meeting, said Malaysia's involvement with the D-8 also provided networking opportunities with member countries at different levels.

"We must remember that we are a member of the international community and it is always an honour for us to be a member of an international grouping, in this case the D-8," he said.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was not able to attend the Cairo gathering due to domestic commitments.

On the possibility of an enlarged membership for the D-8, he said the matter may be discussed at the foreign minister's level and that Malaysia had no proposal towards this.

On the proposal for streamlining visa arrangements to enable free movement of businessmen in the eight countries, he said Malaysia's position was that it should be done on a bilateral basis.

Eight Islamic countries led by Turkey launched the D-8 on June 15, 1997 at a summit in Istanbul.

The tenure of Bangladesh as the current chairman of the D-8 expires soon.

Among the D-8's objectives is to be a forum for a small and cohesive group of Muslim countries to seek solutions to problems hindering expanded economic cooperation.

At its first summit in Istanbul, the D-8 agreed on several priority areas for cooperation and projects for implementation with each country assigned a particular sector.

They are finance, banking, privatisation (Malaysia), industry (Turkey), trade (Egypt), poverty eradication (Indonesia), agriculture (Pakistan), information and telecommunication (Iran), rural development (Bangladesh) and energy (Nigeria).

-- BERNAMA

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