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Morocco-Terrorism

MOROCCO SUPPORTS MALAYSIA'S STAND ON TERRORISM

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 16 (Bernama) -- Morocco today expressed support for Malaysia's call to the United Nations (UN) to tackle the problem of terrorism and organise an international conference on it.

Moroccan Prime Minister Abderahmane El Yousouffi said that like Malaysia, his country also disagreed with the United States-led air strikes on Afghanistan as it would only kill innocent civilians.

In a special interview with Bernama before leaving for home yesterday after a four-day state visit to Malaysia, Abderahmane said although the country was among the first to condemn the Sept 11 attacks on the US, it felt that the bombing of Afghanistan by the US was not an effective move to fight terrorism.

"We should adopt a strategy and a line of action, including sharing of information, and most important, the need to agree on the definition of terrorism," he said.

He said that in defining terrorism, the international committee should not confuse it with the legitimate struggle of national liberalisation movements.

Abderahmane also said that Moroccans regretted the US' move to impose visa restrictions on males from Islamic countries, including Malaysia and Morocco, as it was discriminatory.

He said that many peaceful people such as students, tourists and those seeking medical treatment would be affected and surely there was a need to implement a "more civilised rule for international relations."

He said Muslim students should now look for opportunities to pursue their studies in Muslim countries because they were facing difficulties in western countries following the Sept 11 terrorist attacks.

Malaysia was one of the countries offering ample training institutions and universities, including in the field of telecommunications and petroleum, that had received international recognition, he said.

Abderrahmane said his visit to Malaysia -- the first state visit by a Moroccan prime minister -- was an important milestone in boosting ties between the two countries.

He said this was especially so in so far as creating awareness on the abundance of opportunities that both countries could further develop.

The setting of a Malaysia-Morocco Joint Commission, covering economic, technical, scientific and cultural, would be a catalyst for enhancing cooperation between the two countries, he added.

During his visit, besides the signing the memorandums of understanding on the setting up of the joint commission, Malaysia and Morocco also signed MoUs on air services and the exchange of experts and expertise in information technology between the Multimedia Development Corporation and the Moroccan Information Technopark Corporation.

Abderrahmane, who is leading a 36-member delegation, including businessmen in telecommunications, fisheries, industries and agriculture, said he was fascinated by Malaysia's advancement in the telecommunications and petroleum industries.

He hoped that Petronas, with its vast international experience in oil and gas exploration, would be able to participate actively in Morocco.

The volume of trade between Malaysia and Morocco now stands at RM86 million a year in Malaysia's favour.

Abderahmane believed that two-way trade would be further enhanced with

the new awareness of the various opportunities available.

He said Malaysia and Morocco had also agreed to abolish visa requirements and he hoped that this would be implemented during Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's visit to Morocco next year.

He hoped his visit would spur more movements between the peoples of the two countries, especially in terms of tourism, which could help to foster a better understanding between them.

-- BERNAMA

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