

28 MAY 2001

G15-LEADERS

ONLY SEVEN HEADS OF STATE AND GOVT TO ATTEND G15 SUMMIT

By: Mohd Kamel Othman

JAKARTA, May 28 (Bernama) -- Only seven heads of state and government will attend the 11th Summit of the Group of Fifteen (G15) developing nations which will begin here on Wednesday.

Apart from Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid, the other leaders are Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, Senegal President Abdoulaye Wade, Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez, Egyptian Prime Minister Atef Ebeid, Jamaican Prime Minister James Patterson and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Dr Mahathir will arrive tomorrow.

Initially, nine heads of state and government were scheduled to attend the summit which was being held in Indonesia for the first time.

The Jakarta Post here today reported that Zimbabwe president Robert Mugabe cancelled his Jakarta trip due to the death of Zimbabwe's Defence Minister Moven Mahachi in a car crash on Saturday.

It was also reported that the arrival of Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika was also in doubt as there were reports that he will be substituted by a senior ranking state official, expected to be the speaker of the parliament.

The other member states will be represented by high-ranking state officials.

The theme for this summit is "Harnessing the potential of the digital era for development."

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

Today, the 22nd meeting of the Foreign Ministers was held at the Jakarta Convention Centre, the venue of the summit.

The Foreign Ministers, along with personal representatives of the leaders will finalise the final points to the joint communique and the first ever declaration issued in the group's 12-year history -- The Jakarta Declaration.

The Declaration is expected to highlight the G-15 leaders' commitment to close the digital divide between developing and developed countries, and promote the growth of information technology to overcome development problems.

The joint communique, due to be issued by the heads of delegation, is expected to express concern for the growing disparity in the information communication technology and communications field, along with other matters of concern to developing countries, such as multilateral trade and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). -- BERNAMA

MKO FR