

25 MAY 2001  
G15-MEETING  
WORK CLOSELY IN INFORMATION, SAYS MEGAWATI

By: Mohd Kamel Othman

JAKARTA, May 25 (Bernama) -- Indonesian vice president Megawati Soekarnoputri said the governments and private sectors of the G-15 group of developing nations should work as close as possible in the field of information.

She said it was important that there be a co-operative endeavour to build a foundation for the improvement of the group's expertise through the mastery of the information and communication technology.

"It is by means of the technology that information can be mobilised, managed and propagated," she said at the opening of the G15 private sector meeting at the Jakarta Convention Centre, here, today.

"In the dynamism of today's development, it seems hardly possible for us to disregard the role and function of information," she told delegates at the meeting, ahead of the G15's two-day summit which starts on Wednesday.

Megawati said things can take place provided that there is a serious political will on the part of the governments.

"It is only by means of the capabilities of our human resources that we can select the forms and methods which are appropriate for forging a cooperation network, including funding, in selecting, possessing or operating the technology as well as in channelling and utilising information."

About 750 participants consisting of bankers, business leaders, small and medium-scale entrepreneurs as well as ICT professionals are attending the one-day meeting.

The meeting is for participants to exchange ideas and experiences on crucial matters of mutual concern and interest to G15 private sectors, specifically issues relating to SMEs, trade financing and ICT.

G15 comprises 19 countries -- India, Indonesia, Algeria, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Malaysia, Venezuela, Peru, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Jamaica, Kenya, Iran and Colombia.

The G15 was founded in 1989 to foster co-operation among developing countries and encourage the diverse group to speak with a single voice at other international forums.

The first G15 Summit was held in Kuala Lumpur in 1990.

Eight heads of state are due to take part in the summit here beginning May 30. They are from Indonesia, Algeria, Senegal, Nigeria, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, Jamaica and Malaysia.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is scheduled to arrive here on Tuesday for the summit being hosted for the first time by Indonesia.

Delegations from Argentina, Brazil, India, Iran, Colombia and Egypt will be led by deputy heads of state while other national delegations will be led by their foreign ministers.

The ministerial meeting of the G15 will be held on Monday.

The theme of the 11th Summit here is "Harnessing the potential of the digital era for development". The theme also complements Indonesia's efforts and commitment as an archipelagic state to fully harness the technological innovation potential for its development process. -- BERNAMA

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