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Asem-Denmark

ASEM SUMMIT TO DISCUSS FINDING THE ROOT CAUSES OF TERRORISM

By: Yong Soo Heong

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 8 (Bernama) -- Identifying the root causes of terrorism and finding solutions to tackle the issue will be one of the topics of discussion at the Asia-Europe Meeting (Asem), a summit of Asian and European leaders, in Copenhagen, Denmark, from Sept 22 to 24.

Lasse Reimann, Denmark's ambassador to Malaysia, said that Denmark, which holds the European Union (EU) presidency from July 1 to Dec 31 this year, hoped that Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would attend the biennial summit since he has been a firm believer of finding the root causes of terrorism from very early on in the aftermath of the Sept 11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

"We certainly need to address this issue seriously among a host of other issues related to terrorism," Reimann said in an interview with Bernama.

Terrorism, he said, could be widely defined to include money laundering, trafficking in people and drugs, and piracy.

He said Denmark placed great importance in the Asem Summit as it was a forum for European and Asian cooperation to gather greater substance.

He said that while there had been cooperation between the two continents, it was not as intense as Denmark would like it to be.

Reimann said the Asem Summit would have three broad pillars of discussion: political dialogue, economy and trade and social, cultural and educational issues. It will be attended by leaders from 15 EU and 10 Asian countries.

The summit would enable the leaders to have an informal dialogue and to listen to various views.

"It's not about convincing each other but sharing views informally," he said.

Reimann said Denmark viewed the informal but high-powered dialogue as a golden opportunity for the leaders to get to know each other better and to break down barriers if they had existed before.

"Later on, if they were to have a problem, they might find it very easy to call their counterparts. This is very helpful in moving forward through enhanced understanding and mutual respect."

Referring to initiatives under the Asem, Reimann said Denmark was working closely with Malaysia, Singapore and Ireland on a proposal to effect life-long learning among their citizens.

This human resource development initiative had pooled experts from the government, academia and labour in the four countries concerned to examine various approaches to effect life-long learning and their findings will be presented to the summit.

Reimann said their recommendations would look at training programmes for skilled workers, educational courses, exchanges of students and workers, and conditions in the workplace.

He said that once the recommendations were endorsed at the summit, they would be rolled out on a wider scale to benefit member countries.

"This is the sort of window which is important for us to find ways to develop our human resources. This fits well with Malaysia's priorities and it certainly fits well with Danish priorities. It is something concrete which Denmark and Malaysia are doing together with Singapore and Ireland under the Asem process," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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