

27/10/2002

Abdullah: Policies implemented by PM to continue (HL)

Mustapha Kamil

DEPUTY Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has assured Pacific Basin business leaders that policies implemented by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will continue even after the latter leaves office late next year.

Abdullah, who was named as Dr Mahathir's successor, yesterday said "all policies that have proven to be successful will not be changed".

"There is no reason why they should be changed," he said when meeting several leaders from the region's business community at the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) meeting.

Abdullah also gave an assurance that Malaysia would remain a business-friendly nation and would continue to be guided by its Malaysia Incorporated policy.

He said the region's business community had wanted to know whether current policies of the Malaysian Government would change after Dr Mahathir stepped down.

Abdullah also assured the leaders of Malaysia's long-term stability, saying the Government would continue to weed out terrorism.

On China rapidly becoming a highly competitive economy, he said Malaysia would have to make certain adjustments to compete, among others, by moving into the production of value-added products while continuing to seek new markets.

Abdullah said he had faced few problems in meeting international participants at the Apec meeting.

"Many have come to congratulate me (on being appointed Dr Mahathir's successor). I am not totally unknown to them," he said.

Abdullah later met Mexican President Vicente Fox and Indonesian President Megawati Soekarnoputri.

Fox said it was time for Mexico to start looking at Southeast Asian economies including ways to strengthen relations with Malaysia.

He said the country was eager to learn from Malaysia's experience in developing its economy while maintaining equal wealth distribution.

Fox also wanted to see increased co-operation between small and medium-scale enterprises in both nations, adding that such collaborations could be undertaken in either country.

On terrorism, Abdullah reiterated Malaysia's stand that the root cause of the menace must first be examined.

He said Fox agreed with Malaysia's stand on the matter.

In his meeting with Megawati, Abdullah invited the Indonesian leader to attend the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Organisation of Islamic Conference) meetings in Kuala Lumpur next year.

Megawati indicated Indonesia's willingness to participate in both meetings.

Abdullah also conveyed Malaysia's regret over the recent bomb attacks in Bali. Megawati, in reply, said it was vital for both nations to work closely in overcoming the terrorism problem.