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Myanmar-democracy
MYANMAR IS LAYING DOWN FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY

By: Rohana Mustaffa

YANGON, Aug 19, (Bernama) -- Secretary 1 of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) of Myanmar Lt Gen Khin Nyunt said today the government is taking the necessary steps in laying down foundations for the emergence of a demoractic state.

"The democracy that we seek to build might not be identical to that which prevails in the West but it is surely be based on universal principles of liberty, justice and equality with the rule of law," he said.

In his welcoming remarks at the Myanmar-Malaysia Technology Conference here, he stressed that the demoractic society that the government envisioned is one where all the 135 national races of the country live in peace and harmony and join hand in building a prosperous and modern nation.

Visiting Prime Minister of Malaysia Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad officiated the opening of the three-day conference.

Khin Nyunt however said that such a transition could not be done in haste and in a haphazard manner as the world is full of examples of where a hasty transition from one system to another had led to unrest, instability and even failed state.

As such, he, the Myanmar government under the leadership of Chairman of the SPDC Senior General Than Shwe is laying the necessary political, economic, social and human resource foundations to ensure a stable and smooth transition to democracy.

He pointed out that for more than 40 years, Myanmar was plagued by internal insurgencies but due to the effort of the government, 17 out of the 18 armed groups in the country had returned to the legal fold, and peace and stability reigned over the nation as never before in the history of Myanmar.

Khin Nyunt took pride that Yangon is one of the safest cities in the world and this could be witnessed by the participants of the conference.

He stressed that with the return of peace, the government is devoting itself to economic development and progress.

"Some western nations have imposed sanctions and embargoes against Myanmar for their own political motives and Myanmar has received practically no development assistance from bilateral sources or multilateral institutions," he said.

He said relying on their own resources and by combining the strength of the government, people and Tamadaw (armed forces), Myanmar had been able to achieve significant progress in nation building.

He said that even without overseas development assistance and the additional constraints of sanctions from the West, Myanmar is building the nation relying on its own natural and human resources.

He quoted Dr Mahathir who once said, "the only helping hand we can rely on is the one at the end of our arm".

Myanmar had been able to achieve an average annual economic growth of 8.4 per cent for 1996-97 to 2000-2001 Five Year Plan.

"We attained better than 10 per cent last fiscal year and expects the same good performance this year," he said.

Khin Nyunt went on to list down several development projects that had been successfully carried out by the Myanmar government such as in the last 12 years it had constructed more than 4,200 miles of roads, 1,100 miles of railroads and nearly 150 bridges, the setting up of more universities and colleges, and the development of ICT through Myanmar ICT Park.

He said Myanmar also paid special attention to the conference and the very fact that the conference was being attended by more than 500 business related people from both sides offered a chance to engage in business matching.

He also said Myanmar is offering great potential in terms of trade and investment and it is the government's hopes that the conference would open the door for smart partnership for better business and technology cooperation between Myanmar and Malaysia.

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