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OIC-Karzai

AFGHAN PRESIDENT KARZAI TO ATTEND OIC SUMMIT

By: R.Ravichandran

PUTRAJAYA, Oct 11 (Bernama) -- Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai will lead his country's delegation to the 10th Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Summit to be held here from Oct 11-18.

Afghanistan Ambassador to Malaysia Amanullah Jayhoon said that four ministers -- foreign, finance, women affairs and security -- would accompany Karzai during the visit.

Amanullah said that President Karzai's attendance at the summit to be held at the Putrajaya Convention Centre here showed the importance placed by the Central Asian country on the 57-member organisation.

He said that Karzai would focus on the importance of unity among the organisation and the Muslim world and how they could use the resources to solve problems besetting the Muslims.

"The president and the ministers will also take the opportunity to discuss with some of the leaders of member countries the ongoing reconstruction and the rebuilding of peace and how they can help us in that area," he told Bernama.

Amanullah also said that there would a meeting between President Karzai and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the sidelines of the summit.

Karzai is expected to stay until the end of the eight-day conference themed "Knowledge and Morality for the Progress of the Ummah".

Amanullah noted that the OIC, of which Afghanistan is a founder member, had in the past tried to help to mediate when the country was in deep political conflict.

"We appreciate the support rendered by the OIC and member countries all this while... this includes the resolution to support Afghanistan's reconstruction and rebuilding of peace during the last Doha Summit (in 2000)," he said.

Amanullah hoped that OIC members would continue to support his country as Afghanistan was still in need of assistance in many areas in order to develop which was an important ingredient for lasting peace and stability.

"We are optimistic that the OIC will continue to support and help us... this is very important so as not to return to the past (wars and internal conflict)," he said.

Afghanistan was under the occupation of the Soviet Union for almost 10 years after an invasion in December 1979. The collapse of Najibullah's communist regime in 1992 was followed by the rule of the Mujahidin but fighting among rival factions brought the Taliban into power in September 1996 and they ruled with repressive policies.

The Taliban was ousted by the US-led forces following the Sept 11 terrorist attacks and a new government was formed under Karzai who initially served as the chairman of the Afghan Interim Authority in December 2001.

Karzai, 46, was elected by a nationwide Loya Jirga (Grand Assembly) in June 2002 as the President of the country with a population of 25 million.

He first visited Malaysia in February 2003 for the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit in Kuala Lumpur.

-- BERNAMA

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