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APEC-THAKSIN

APEC TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES OF TERRORISM ON GLOBALISATION

By: Arul Rajoo

BANGKOK, Oct 13 (Bernama) -- Thailand Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra said the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation 2003 (Apec) which starts here tomorrow, will among other things, address the challenges of international terrorism which could seriously affect globalisation and the multilateral trade.

He said the Apec arrived at an important crossroad which had seen violence by international terrorist groups, particularly the Jemaah Islamiah.

Besides that, Thaksin said Apec should focus on containing the spread of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and other diseases in the region.

"These issues are as important as Apec's core agenda of trade and investment, economic and technological cooperation," the Thai leader said in his welcoming remarks to delegates at the Apec 2003, contained in the Apec Media Handbook.

The meeting, to be held under tight security due to fear of terrorist strike, will be attended by world leaders including US President, George Bush and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin.

Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is expected to arrive here on Sunday after the ongoing Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit in Putrajaya, to attend his last international forum before he retires at the end of the month.

The Apec Summit, comprising 21 members from nations around the Pacific Rim, will kick-off tomorrow with the Senior Officials meetings, followed by Ministerial meetings on Oct 17 and 18 before Apec Economic Leaders meet on Oct 20 and 21.

Also being held during the Apec are the Apec Business Advisory Council (Abac) and Apec CEO Summit.

Thaksin said in order to ensure Apec's pivotal role in addressing these challenges, Thailand had proposed "A World of Differences: Partnership for the Future" as the theme for the summit.

"It underscores the need for members of Apec to combine in order to create a partnership of synergy for the progress and prosperity of the whole region," he added.

Thaksin said the theme of partnership was also reflected in the logo of Apec 2003, featuring the image of the Suphanahongsa Royal Barge, which reflects Thailand's national heritage and culture.

In the context of Apec, the Royal Barge symbolizes Thailand's role as host and its intention to provide the vehicle that connects the two sides of the Pacific region through fostering strong bonds of historic, economic, social and cultural relations.

Formed in 1989 as a trade association for the countries of Asia and the Americas, Apec has a coordination committee to handle the threats of terrorism.

The Apec chair rotates annually among its members, and each chair is responsible for the annual ministerial meeting of foreign and trade ministers.

Mexico hosted the event last year while the 2004 edition will be held in Chile, followed by South Korea in 2005.

The member nations are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea,

Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand,  
the US and Vietnam. -- BERNAMA  
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