

14 JAN 2003

APPF-Participation

APPF EXCO TO DISCUSS INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 14 (Bernama) -- The executive committee of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) will hold a meeting to decide on the status of parliamentarians participating at its annual meeting in their personal capacity.

APPF chairman Tan Sri Michael Chen said when the APPF was formed 11 years ago, membership was not clearly defined as it also allowed parliamentarians to participate in their personal capacity.

Individual participation became an issue at this 11th APPF when a parliamentarian from Canada was not recognised as a Canadian representative as he is not in that country's official delegation.

As a result of yesterday's incident, the forum decided that parliamentarian Svend Robinson cannot be allowed to speak as representing Canada as he was not a member of the country's official delegation. The meeting also decided that his points of view presented in the meeting would be taken off the record.

"The matter is still uncertain and it will be discussed at the next executive committee, but as for this meeting, Robinson was not allowed to participate," Chen said when met at the end of today's meeting here.

Chen said at this point, any parliamentarian could attend the meeting but whether he was allowed to speak without the approval of the official delegation of his country had yet to be decided.

As host, Malaysia automatically sits on the APPF executive committee while Chen, who is the Senate President, was automatically appointed the APPF chairman.

On the 11th APPF meeting, which ends tomorrow, Chen said he was very happy with the progress as most delegates were taking an active part in the discussions, especially on issues such as terrorism and world trade.

He said most of them were impressed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's opening speech yesterday.

"Many delegates described his speech as full of useful suggestions that can be brought forward to be discussed further by the parliamentarians," he said.

A joint communique is expected to be issued tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA

AZH AHH YBY