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OIC-Name

OIC'S NAME NO LONGER SUITABLE, SAYS SYED HAMID

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 18 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will get the views of members of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) on whether the grouping's name should be changed in keeping with current developments.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today the move was appropriate to give substance to the 57-member organisation which was set up in 1969.

"Now it's called OIC, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference...I think it's no longer suitable," he told reporters after opening the "DeCenie Pizzeria", a pizza restaurant at Wisma Belia, here.

"One approach is to get the views of the other members on whether we should change our name to take cognizance of the current situation so as to show that it is really an organisation or network for cooperation and not just for holding conferences," he said.

This change was in line with the agreement of the OIC leaders to continue with the comprehensive study on the OIC secretariat as contained in the Putrajaya Declaration issued at the conclusion of the 10th OIC Summit in Putrajaya yesterday, he said.

Syed Hamid hoped that the current consultants appointed for the review of the OIC secretariat would be able to submit a report including recommendations to the OIC foreign ministers meeting in Istanbul next year.

"We hope that these consultants, when they submit their report before the OIC foreign ministers meeting, they will include all these recommendations and see their suitability or otherwise, because any changes will require the changing of the charter. We have to get consensus. It's not easy to get the consensus of 57 countries," he said.

The review of the OIC secretariat is one of 12 measures in the action plan to be taken by the OIC to strengthen its position to face the challenges in the world.

Syed Hamid also criticised the statement of Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini who had described Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's remarks on the Jews at the opening of the summit as "gravely offensive",

"He has made a baseless remark on the prime minister's statement...has he forgotten that his own prime minister (Silvio) Berlusconi had issued a statement that was a direct insult to the Muslims after the Sept 11 (terror attacks on the United States)," he said.

Syed Hamid, however, expressed his appreciation to French President Jacques Chirac and Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis for blocking the European Union, which ended its summit yesterday, from issuing a strongly-worded statement condemning Dr Mahathir for his statement.

"They are more mature and responsible," he said.

Syed Hamid also criticised those western leaders who did not speak out against the actions of the Tel Aviv regime on the Palestinians.

"Don't try to look away...why was no action taken against Israel in view that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon had just issued a statement that he might attack Syria again," he said,

On Singapore's proposal that the dispute over the KTM land in Tanjung Pagar be referred to the International Court of Justice for arbitration, Syed Hamid said Malaysia had received a letter on the matter from the republic but had yet to decide.

"We will look into it before making a response," he said.

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