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NAM-Reaction (Mahathir)

DR MAHATHIR'S SPEECH IS COMPREHENSIVE, SAY DELEGATES

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 24 (Bernama) -- Leaders attending the 13th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit here have described Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's inaugural address as NAM chairman as one containing views that can make the world a better place for everyone.

They said Dr Mahathir's hour-long speech was comprehensive as it covered almost all aspects and problems besetting the NAM countries, which account for two-thirds of the United Nations, and the world.

Speaking to Bernama during a break after the opening ceremony today, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said everyone should pay heed to Dr Mahathir's message as it was thought-provoking.

"Your Prime Minister is a very wise man. So, we should all listen to him," she said at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC).

Lesotho Prime Minister Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili said Dr Mahathir had hit the nail on the head by touching on the need for NAM to solve problems and issues causing discontent among the developing world.

This included the growing inequality between the poor and the rich and between the developed and developing countries, he said.

"He was very articulate and indeed perfect (in his views)," he said.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Dr Naji Sabri said Dr Mahathir's speech reflected the aspirations of and challenges faced by the grouping of developing countries in its quest to ensure a better and peaceful world for humankind.

"Excellent...more than excellent. We appreciate very much the message given by the Prime Minister. We think that is an excellent speech," he said.

On Dr Mahathir's call that war should be outlawed, Dr Naji, whose country is facing the threat of a United States-led war, said war was the enemy of everyone and Dr Mahathir's speech showed that peace should be the slogan and the desire of everybody.

Dr Naji said Dr Mahathir also drew the attention of NAM leaders to the importance of revitalising the movement as the important voice of the developing world and to the need for enhancing South-South Cooperation.

"Dr Mahathir's speech shows the true spirit of the NAM movement. He set the ground on how to make peace and security," said Dr Naji, who is spearheading Baghdad's efforts to send a strong anti-war message to the US and its allies.

Afghanistan Foreign Minister Dr Abdullah Abdullah said Dr Mahathir's speech was "very comprehensive" and had all the ingredients on NAM's role in a world which is full of uncertainties.

Dr Abdullah said while Dr Mahathir expressed the view that Iraq should comply fully with the UN Security Council resolution on disarmament, he also stressed that the solution should be by peaceful means as war would only bring devastating consequences.

"This thing is also of course well expressed in the speech...As a whole (Dr Mahathir stressed the need for) the continued revitalisation of NAM...(and) why it should take place...that was the main message," he said.

Jamaican Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade K.D. Knight said Dr Mahathir had clearly expressed the developing world's desire for peace and the importance of developing countries cooperating in eradicating poverty.

He said Dr Mahathir had stressed the need for a multilateral approach

in dealing with world problems.

"A powerful speech...that war is not the solution. He was also extremely clear on the need for NAM to realise its potential," he said.

Bangladesh's Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan said Dr Mahathir was very articulate and well focused in his views, which covered all the agendas and issues of NAM countries and the world.

He said NAM countries should take the cue from Dr Mahathir's views on the importance of economic cooperation, South-South cooperation and the opposition to war.

"I think it (view on outlawing war) touched everybody...it touched everybody's heart," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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