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NAM-Abdullah (Commonwealth)

ABDULLAH WANTS SECRETARIAT TO REFLECT COMMONWEALTH MEMBERSHIP

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 22 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today expressed the hope that the Commonwealth secretariat in London will reflect the overall membership of the organisation.

This was to ensure that the secretariat did not appear to be controlled by the developed nations in the Commonwealth, which comprises 54 former British colonies, the deputy prime minister said.

He said Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon told him at their meeting here today that efforts were being made to ensure this.

"He said the Commonwealth was working towards this end and he also wanted to see Malaysians working in the secretariat," he told reporters after receiving McKinnon who is here to attend the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit as a guest.

As a guest, the Commonwealth secretariat can only attend the opening and closing of the six-day summit and is not involved in its discussions.

Abdullah said McKinnon also briefed him on the programmes to be conducted by the Commonwealth countries.

"He informed me of the programmes, especially those to be implemented after the prime minister retires. Apparently he wanted to know my stand (on these programmes)," he said, adding that he was definitely interested in the Commonwealth programmes.

Abdullah, who will succeed Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in October this year, said: "We also discussed the Commonwealth youth (programme) because this is a programme that can guarantee the future of the Commonwealth."

-- BERNAMA

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