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Syed Hamid-OIC

OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES KEEN ON M'SIA TO ASSUME POST OF OIC SEC-GEN

KUALA LUMPUR, June 21 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has been proposed by several member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to nominate a candidate for the secretary-general's post which falls vacant next year, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

He said that based on preliminary discussions with his counterparts from the OIC member countries, there would be no problem for them to give their support for Malaysia's candidature.

"I will find out from the government if we're interested, and if there's a seriousness on the part of the government, we'll think of the names of those suitable to be nominated," he told Bernama on the sidelines of the 54th Umno general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here.

Syed Hamid said that the overwhelming wish of the OIC members for Malaysia to nominate a candidate for the post was evident when they were keen to know whether Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would be interested to hold the post after he steps down in October.

The current OIC secretary-general, Dr Abdelouahed Belkeziz of Morocco, has held the post since 2001. Malaysia's first Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj was the first OIC secretary-general, serving from 1971 to 1973.

Syed Hamid said that it was understood that so far only Bangladesh had nominated a candidate for the post.

He said that the common practice was for the OIC secretary-general to be chosen following consultations instead of being elected as in the case of Belkeziz.

Asked to comment on the chances of Malaysia's candidate being chosen to assume the post, he said: "I think it isn't something difficult to gain acceptance because Malaysia's reputation and the country's capability in managing an organisation have been well recognised."

Asked whether he already has a few names to be listed, Syed Hamid said: "They're looking at someone of at least ministerial level."

"As such, we'll have to think seriously of several people who could possibly be eligible to become the OIC secretary-general."

He said that when a candidate had been determined, the matter had first to be discussed with the other OIC member countries.

"If we're to say now that we wish to but have yet to determine the candidate, that will also be unfair," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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