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NAM-Route

STAGE FOR DEVELOPING NATIONS TO VOICE THEIR STAND

By: Muin Abdul Majid

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 7 (Bernama) -- As the world moves into the 21st century, the future of developing nations appears hazy unlike that of the developed countries which have leapt further by keeping their firm hold on the globe's economic and political landscape.

Hence there is an urgent need for the realisation of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement, made during the Prime Minister's visit to Egypt last month, for the weak nations to unite in order to face global challenges which are in the hands of the superpowers.

If this fails to materialise, all the objections and protests against overzealousness and hypocrisy of the superpowers, directed against the small nations, would only fall on deaf ears.

An example of this is the "game of chess" orchestrated by the United States and its allies in their bid to wage war against Iraq, which they accuse as hiding weapons of mass destruction, an allegation which has yet to be backed with concrete evidence.

This is the reason why Malaysia sees the 13th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit here on Feb 20-25 as the critical platform to charter the appropriate and correct course for the world to move.

It cannot be denied that the NAM's relevancy has gathered more weight.

Currently with 114 nations and set to welcome Timor Leste as its newest member on Feb 24, NAM has and will continue to play a pivotal role for the developing nations.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar recently said many had opened their eyes to the crucial role played by NAM, which echoed the opinion of developing nations on the various issues linked to their survival.

He said among the important issues were ensuring world peace as stated in the United Nations' Charter.

Syed Hamid said there were many quarters which disputed NAM's existence especially after the end of the Cold War, which saw the clash in political ideology between the United States and former Soviet-bloc nations.

This had given rise to what was then called as the West and East-bloc nations.

"If we allow such talks to continue, then finally there will a belief that there is no need for the existence of an organisation to voice the opinion of the Third World countries," he said.

Syed Hamid said the 13th NAM Summit here showed that there was tremendous revival in interest for the movement as a forum for developing nations to voice their stand.

The Kuala Lumpur summit has drawn the participation of many heads of nations, observers and representatives of non-governmental organisations apart from over 2,000 journalists.

He said the summit would enable NAM members to air their grievances and concerns on issues linked to globalisation, huge digital divide between the developed and developing nations apart from the way the world was being governed.

Syed Hamid said currently world peace had turned unipolar and was based on liberal democracy.

The existence of a liberal and free market which is being shadowed by violence has further required the developing nations to effectively play their respective roles to prevent them from being marginalised.

"If not, whatever system or rules introduced by world bodies will only benefit the developed countries," he said, referring to the trade negotiations linked to the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

"We should give the input for the developing nations to benefit from trade, investments and financial systems.

"In trade, not only the developed nations can venture into the market in developing countries, we want the market in developed nations to be opened more for the developing nations," he said.

On the Iraqi issue, Syed Hamid urged the United Nations to safeguard its credibility and integrity and not to bow to pressures from any of the superpowers which would only agree with the world body if it followed their wishes.

"If not, they (superpowers) will simply shove aside the UN. This development is very dangerous to world peace," he said.

Syed Hamid said at the NAM summit, Malaysia wished to emphasise that peace and not war was the key to world stability and security.

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