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NAM-Africa

NAM TO WORK CLOSELY WITH AFRICAN UNION ON DEVELOPMENT

KUALA LUMPUR, May 30 (Bernama) -- The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) will work closely with the African Union (AU) in efforts to fully implement a development plan aimed at bringing investment into Africa.

Chair of the NAM co-ordinating bureau, Datuk Rastam Mohamed Isa said that the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad), led and managed by the Union, reflected the determination of African governments and peoples to wrest control of their future.

Nepad, launched in 2001, showed that the African countries were serious about assuming responsibility over their development, to fight hunger, poverty and diseases and to ensure sustainable economic and social development in the continent, he said at a ceremony to mark the 40th anniversary of Africa Day in New York Wednesday.

"The efforts of Africa in resolving the conflicts in the continent are commended by the Movement and these efforts as well as Africa's social and development efforts should continue to be supported by the international community, including amongst the membership of the Movement," said Rastam, who is Malaysia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

He said that the increasingly heavier burden of debt payments, insufficient and sluggish inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) and overseas development assistance (ODA) and lack of humanitarian assistance to Africa were hampering the continent's desired long-term developmental goals.

"In this context, NAM believes that together we should continue to pursue concrete measures towards addressing these problems at the international level," he said.

Wrapping up a meeting in Nigeria under the aegis of Nepad, African leaders said Thursday they would lobby for greater support for regional peacekeeping operations and for increased aid and debt relief when they attend the Group of Eight (G8) Summit in France next week.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is NAM chairman, has also been invited for the G8 summit at Evian on Sunday. He leaves tonight.

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