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Cuba to continue revitalising NAM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Cuba, which will assume the presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement in 2006, hopes to continue Malaysia's objective of revitalising the movement to become an effective counter-balancing force against prevailing unilateralism in international affairs.

The republic's Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Abelardo Moreno said NAM, set up as a means for countries of the South to exercise solidarity with one another, had greater potential now.

"In the past, NAM was the middle ground between two existing military blocs but now we only have one bloc (United States), which regrettably exercises unilateralism in international affairs.

"NAM needs to play a role in defending the principles of international law, sovereignty, non-intervention in internal affairs, non-use of force, self determination and independence."

He said the unilateral policies that the US was trying to impose on the rest of the world, as seen in the practice of double standards, disregarding the principles of international law, exercise of coercion, use of force and threats, had angered many countries.

"As Cuba has been blockaded by the US for 43 years - the longest and harshest blockade in the history of mankind - our position in regard to the US is well known.

"I think that if there is an anger against the US, I would say it is a very justified anger."

He said the United Nations, which some people confused with the Security Council, was one of the main places where NAM had to operate.

"One of NAM's objectives should be to revitalise the General Assembly, which is the only plenary and truly democratic body in UN.

"The assembly where a country, irrespective of its size, military power or economic might have one vote, has a tremendous role (in deciding international matters), which it is not playing."

Moreno said NAM should also endeavour to revitalise the UN's other bodies like the Economic and Social Council and democratise the Security Council and to make it more transparent.

"The job is enormous but we have tremendous faith in Malaysia's capacity and leadership to lead the movement towards new goals, activities and new era of prosperity and political activism."

Moreno said the NAM summit was being held in Malaysia because it was a country whose leadership and activism in favour of Third World countries' development, national independence, was widely recognised.

"That and the prestige of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad have brought Malaysia to the forefront of NAM."