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Pretoria sure we can enhance role

SOUTH Africa is confident that Malaysia will be able to further enhance the role of the Non-Aligned Movement in global affairs as well as promote peace and security among member countries.

Director-general of Foreign Affairs Department Abdul Samad Minty said he is looking forward to Malaysia taking over the chairmanship of NAM.

"Prime Minister (Datuk Seri) Dr Mahathir (Mohamad) is very experienced in handling multilateral issues. He will be able to bring about changes in NAM and continue with its role to create a peaceful world and bring about economic and social development.

"Without peace, there is no place for development.

"The 13th NAM Summit has a major task to come up with a consensus and formulation towards achieving peace," he said on the sidelines of the Summit's Senior Officials Meeting yesterday.

NAM was formed in 1961 to address the issue of economic development and co-operation among member countries at the height of the Cold War.

When South Africa took over NAM's chairmanship in 1998, Abdul Samad said, it was identified that the biggest threat to global society was poverty.

But, he said, NAM has since succeeded in developing a dialogue and coherent agenda with leaders of G-8 to address the issues on poverty, globalisation and economic development.

Of late, the role of NAM has taken a twist after it intervened and asked the UN Security Council to have an open debate before the latter adopted any resolution on war against Iraq.

"The Security Council did not only agree to our request, it also allowed the inspectors to present the report on weapons inspection in an open meeting first before presenting it to them."