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PM proposes business council

reports on "Conference of Heads of State or Government of The Non-PRIME MINISTER Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has proposed that a Business Council of the Non-Aligned Movement be set up to enable businessmen to work together, to study, discuss and devise ways to overcome their problems.

"The business community of the South must learn to work together, to study and discuss and devise our way to overcome problems. We learn from the failures and successes of each other.

"But, above all, we must stay together and act together. The rest we have to leave to the politicians. They hold the key and only they can recreate the world environment which can enable economic prosperity through business to return," he said at the opening of a two-day NAM Business Forum in Petaling Jaya yesterday.

To stay and act together, Dr Mahathir said he would suggest that the Business Forum could perhaps consider the establishment of a Business Council of the NAM so that the momentum created can be carried forward.

The inaugural Business Forum, which is being held parallel to the 13th NAM Summit, is jointly organised by Asian Strategic and Leadership Institute (ASLI), Malaysia South-South Association (Massa) and the Foreign Ministry.

Earlier, ASLI chairman Mirzan Mahathir had also proposed the setting up of the Business Council, a platform for businessmen within the NAM member countries to continue with their discussions and deliberation on issues as well as come up with a proposal to be presented to the NAM Heads of Government.

"The Business Forum on South-South Co-operation is an opportune time for businessmen within NAM member countries to seek co-operation and partnership to expand business and trade.

"We have all the resources... There should be a mechanism for the discussions in the Business Forum to be presented at the NAM Summit," he said.

He said businessmen of the South countries must work together to face the challenges of the so-called market globalisation.

"In fact, we are increasingly competing among ourselves at the lower end of the value chain. We find that our markets are opening. We need to discuss and deliberate among ourselves," he said.

Massa president Tan Sri Azman Hashim said the Business Forum provides an opportune time for the NAM business leaders to tackle global issues.

"This augurs well for NAM countries to build on strength, intensify efforts and calls for more smart partnership," he said.