

Umno Youth memo on haze

KUALA LUMPUR: Umno Youth called on Indonesia to implement measures under the Hanoi Action Plan 1998 and the Asean Trans-boundary Agreement 2003 to tackle the haze which has shrouded the region.

In a memorandum to the Indonesian Embassy delivered by the movement's deputy chief Khairy Jamaluddin yesterday, Umno Youth also urged Indonesia to take legal action against any company, including Malaysian, found to be practising open burning.

"Indonesia should seek help from its neighbours to quell the problem of open burning," Khairy told newsmen after handing over the memorandum to the mission's Second Secretary (Consular Affairs) Susapto Anggoro Broto.

"Malaysia considers itself a good

friend and neighbour as we have rendered help during the tsunami (in 2004) and earthquakes in Indonesia, and even helped Indonesian nationals affected by the landslide in Gombak," he said, adding that it would be sad to see bilateral ties between the two countries jeopardised by the haze.

Khairy said Susapto informed him that there was political will now to implement all the steps laid out in the Asean agreement and the Hanoi Action Plan, but the Indonesian government had to observe due process before the necessary laws could be gazetted.

In **Kuching**, Suhakam commissioner Dr Mohammad Hirman Ritom Abdullah said Asean should work together to resolve the problem because the matter involved its member states.

"Certainly (the haze) affects our rights to health, but the question is: What can we do about it?" he said.

"It has to be a government-to-government thing. Issues of open burning and enforcement need to be addressed by the government of the particular country and by the region."

He said that effective policies such as providing alternative means of land clearing and enforcing regulations against open burning were needed.

A support system should be put in place to encourage farmers to not practise slash-and-burn cultivation, he added.

"Maybe machinery can be provided to help farmers clear their land without burning, or give them the know-how to cultivate crops that don't require open burning," he said.