

NAM wants G8 to bring road map back to life

KUALA LUMPUR: The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is urging the Group of Eight (G8) to make serious efforts to resuscitate the road map towards a final settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the Road Map still represented the best hope for progress towards the final settlement.

This was contained in Abdullah's message as NAM chairman to Russian President Vladimir Putin who is the President of the G8. The 32nd G8 Summit is scheduled to start today in St Petersburg, Russia.

Abdullah said the international community must respect the democratic right of the Palestinian people to choose their own government as they had done in the recent election.

"It must engage the new government through contacts and dialogue, not shun or ostracise it," he said.

He added that denial of the much-needed international aid to the Palestinian people was unconscionable and likely to be counterproductive to the search for an early solution to

the conflict.

He said the conflict had been made worse by the separation wall by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories and the current military offensive in Gaza.

"It is clear that there will be no lasting solution to the conflict unless there is an end to the occupation of the Palestinian lands and violation of rights, and the fulfilment of the aspiration and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people for an independent and sovereign state," he said.

On the nuclear issue, NAM insisted on a balanced approach between nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

Abdullah said NAM strongly believed that all issues on safeguards, including those relating to Iran, should be resolved within the International Atomic Energy Agency framework.

On recent developments in the Korean peninsula, the 116 country movement also urged all parties to exercise restraint and to resume negotiations soon to resolve all outstanding issues amicably. — Bernama.