

Malaysia has improved NAM

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PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia has made the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) into an important and internationally recognised organisation during its three-year tenure as chairman, says Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar.

He said Malaysia had also made NAM relevant to the international community, especially during times of crisis, noting that the movement's importance could be felt during the Palestinian, Iraqi and Iranian crises.

"When the United Nations was being reformed, NAM was consulted and there was a lot of discussion, separate meetings with the European Union, the UN secretary-general, the US government and various other bodies," he told a news conference yesterday after opening the international media centre for the NAM Coordinating Bureau (NAMCoB) Ministerial Meeting.

Malaysia, which took the helm as NAM chair from South Africa when it hosted the 13th NAM Summit in Kuala Lumpur in February 2003, will pass the baton to Cuba in September.

Syed Hamid said that during its tenure as chair, Malaysia took an unprecedented step by staging the first NAM Meeting on the Advancement of Women last year that resulted in the establishment of an internationally recognised gender centre.

In the same year, Malaysia hosted the sixth Conference of Ministers of Information of Non-Aligned Countries (Cominac) meeting in November, which gave birth to the NAM News Network (NNN) as well as a NAM portal for the benefit of member nations.

Without NAM, the developing and South-South countries would be facing more problems due to the lack of coordinated efforts to solve their woes, he said.

"These may not be of interest to the public because they are not involved and not a popular subject to be reported. I am not surprised when a lot of people said NAM is irrelevant," he added.

However, he said NAM's views were now well recognised internationally. — Bernama



FOR NEWSMEN: Syed Hamid (seated) speaking to Malaysian National News Agency general manager Datuk Syed Jamil Syed Jaafar after opening the international media centre in Putrajaya yesterday. — Bernamapic