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Malaysian appointed sec-gen

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KUALA LUMPUR: Delegates to the Asean Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (Aipa) meeting yesterday approved the appointment of former Malaysian Foreign Ministry official Datuk Md Yusoff Md Zain as its permanent secretary-general, the first in its 28 years of existence.

His three-year term takes effect from May 1, 2007.

Malaysia has been given the honour to be the first Aipa secretary-general as decided during the extraordinary meeting of the Executive Committee in Kuala Lumpur in April.

The newly-elected secretary-general will be based at the Aipa secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia and has diplomatic authority to oversee the decisions and programmes adopted by the assembly.

Aipa president Tan Sri Ramli Ngah

Talib, who is Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat, said that by appointing a permanent secretary-general, the grouping recognised the need to establish a permanent system of intra-regional consultation and coordination among the regional parliaments.

"This appointment therefore endorses the consensus reached in our previous general assemblies on the strengthening of the organisation, which paves the way for a more dynamic Aipa as a regional inter-parliamentary organisation as well as in the multilateral fora," he said at the first plenary session of 28th Aipa General Assembly yesterday.

He also stressed that the secretary-general is encouraged to establish cooperation with other international and inter-parliamentary organisations, particularly

the United Nations, Asean and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, to find ways to address the complex challenges of a new globalised era.

Aipa comprises the House of Representatives from Indonesia, the Dewan Rakyat and Dewan Negara from Malaysia, the Congress from the Philippines, Singapore's Parliament and the National Assemblies of Thailand, Laos and Cambodia.

Brunei and Myanmar, which do not have a parliament in their government system, are special observers with privileges in all Aipa meetings.

Australia, Canada, China, the European Parliament, Japan, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Russia, South Korea and the United States are Aipa observers. — Bernama