

**#ASEAN: ASEAN Chairman Hopes For Early Conclusion Of South China Sea CoC - Najib Bernama**  
**April 27, 2015**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 27 (Bernama) -- Malaysia, as the Chairman of ASEAN 2015, hopes that progress towards an early conclusion of the Code of Conduct (CoC) in the South China Sea will be achieved.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said recent developments had raised concerns about the South China Sea and given the importance of its sea lanes to international trade, it was natural that almost any occurrence there would attract global attention.

"ASEAN must address these developments in a proactive, but also in a positive and constructive way," he said at the opening of the 26th ASEAN Summit at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre here, today.

He said besides continuing engagement and cooperative relationships with countries outside the region, ASEAN needed to peacefully manage differences closer to home including overlapping maritime claims without tension increasing.

Najib said respect for international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982, must be the basis of the rules of engagement and activities in the South China Seas.

The leaders of the 10-member regional pact are in the capital to attend the two-day summit which began yesterday.

The 10 ASEAN members comprise Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei and Vietnam.

The overlapping territorial maritime claims had resulted in the signing of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DoC) in 2002 between ASEAN and China.

In the declaration, among others, the parties concerned reaffirmed that the adoption of a code of conduct in the South China Sea would further promote peace and stability in the region and agreed to work, on the basis of consensus, towards the eventual attainment of this objective.

To date, there has been no consensus on the CoC.

Thailand's Foreign Minister General Tanasak Patimapragorn was reportedly said on Sunday that the ASEAN and China joint working group on the CoC would meet in Thailand in May for further discussions on the document's formulation.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2015 BERNAMA

Source : <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/newsindex.php?id=1129650>