

Over 50 Countries to Participate In UN Security Council Open Debate On Non-proliferation of WMD - Ahmad Zahid

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NEW YORK, Aug 23 (Bernama) -- Over 50 countries have indicated their participation at the United Nations (UN) Security Council Open Debate on Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), which Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi will chair, at the UN Headquarters here on Tuesday (Aug 23).

The Open Debate is held at the initiative of Malaysia as the Security Council President, in line with its long-standing principled position on non-proliferation of WMD, Ahmad Zahid told Malaysian journalists reporting on his five-day working visit to the United States beginning Monday (Aug 22).

He said the high-level presiding of the meeting demonstrated Malaysia's commitment to the UN and multilateralism.

Ahmad Zahid said the Open Debate was aimed at promoting further dialogues and cooperation on non-proliferation, particularly in light of the emerging proliferation risks of weapons of mass destruction to non-state actors.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is also expected to participate in the meeting.

Ahmad Zahid said his visit was in conjunction with Malaysia's Presidency of the UN Security Council for the month of August.

During his visit here, the deputy prime minister will also hold bilateral meetings with Ivica Dacic, First Deputy Prime and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, to discuss bilateral and regional issues of mutual concerns.

He also said as a Security Council member, Malaysia played a crucial role in selecting the next Secretary-General, to be decided later this year, since the term of the current Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon would end this year.

"We believe in the need for the selection process to be transparent and inclusive. We will continue in our efforts to engage with Council members, the wider UN membership and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that whoever is selected to lead the UN will be the most suitable and qualified for the challenging job," he added.

Ahmad Zahid also said the selection of Malaysia as President of the UN Security Council for the month of August was a history and an honour for the country.

He said the debate would involve the participation of 60 countries.

"It involves several issues concerning WMD that are happening and monitored by the UN to avoid adverse consequences on the world community, if not addressed early by the UN, and will lead the world to be chaotic," he added.

Among them, he said, was the use of WMD in the conflict in Syria.

Also present during the media conference were Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman and Malaysia's Permanent Representative to the UN, Datuk Ramlan Ibrahim.

Ahmad Zahid's visit here is scheduled to end on Aug 26.

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