

PM: Asean members must heed resolutions

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ASEAN has had a poor record of incorporating its own decisions into the national legislation of member countries, said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"We have done better in giving national effect to wider international treaties and conventions," he remarked.

The Prime Minister stressed that Asean Community members must adhere to a common set of "community values".

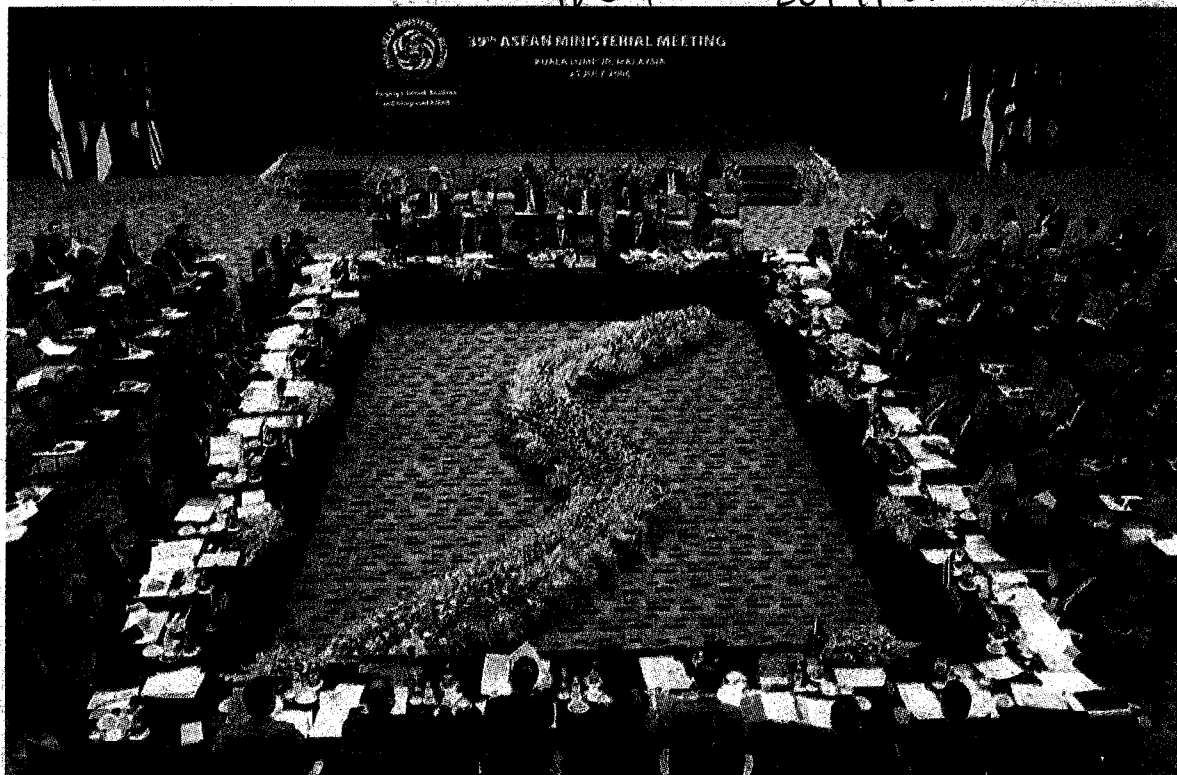
He added that the acceptance of good governance should be a priority in the respective countries and societies.

"In our region, the situation in Myanmar is impacting upon the image and credibility of Asean. We would very much like to have Myanmar move forward with the rest of Asean," he said.

"Therefore, we hope the government of Myanmar will take the necessary steps."

Speaking at the opening of the 39th Asean Ministerial Meeting yesterday, Abdullah said that community building in Asean should adopt the approach of proceeding step by step.

This, he said, was the only way to ensure that Asean achieved true consensus on establishing a set of common values, perceptions and outlook.



PLENARY SESSION: The two-day meeting, titled *Forging a United, Resilient and Integrated Asean*, is to shape the region's agenda for the 12th Asean Summit in the Philippines this December. — Bernamapic

"Asean the association is said to be *sui generis*, or altogether unique. Asean the community will equally be *sui generis*," he said.

"The integration process will not require member states to forfeit their sovereign rights and competencies. They will remain free to pursue their core national or bilateral interests."

In building the Asean

Community, Abdullah said, there should be universal acceptance that community interest would prevail over national interest on issues affecting the community.

He said the larger community interest should never become subordinate to the veto of only one or a few members, and that there should be in place capacities for enforcing

community decisions.

On future regional economic crises, Abdullah said East Asian economic integration could be the first line of defence.

He said economic integration could also help to lock in greater predictability and transparency with regard to economic policies of regional countries.

This was one of the rea-

sons Asean countries must integrate more, and integrate quickly, he said.

"We must, therefore, strengthen further the Asean Plus Three cooperation process which pertinently began in 1997," he said.

"We should also continue to build upon our success of convening the East Asia Summit, which we did at the end of last year."