

Diplomats urged to maintain Asean spirit

KUALA LUMPUR: A prosperous and peaceful Asean cannot achieve stability if the region is surrounded by poverty, strife and uncertainties, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid said.

In view of this, the new generation of Asean diplomats should understand the common problem and work together to resolve them in line with the examples set by the present corps of Asean leaders, he said.

"The spirit of Asean cohesiveness and co-operation should be

an important working principle," he said when closing the eight-week foreign service course for junior Asean diplomats at the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations on Saturday.

Twenty-five diplomats from Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, Brunei, Thailand and Malaysia completed the course conducted under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Department.

Citing the Cambodian experience, Ahmad Sarji said, Asean had reason to be proud of its constructive role to reduce interna-

tional and regional problems.

From the beginning of the conflict, "we firmly stated our common stand that the destiny of Cambodia should be determined only by the people through peaceful means," he said.

He also said the proposal for an East Asian Economic Caucus was timely and relevant with the region being among the fastest-growing centres in the world.

Malaysia was glad more countries, including China, were supporting the concept, he added. — Bernama