

We must share our expertise, says PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — There is a need for closer co-operation among developing countries to expand economic relations and meet common challenges, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said such efforts would enable these countries to learn and benefit from each other.

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia was deeply committed to the concept of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries.

One of Malaysia's commitments, Dr Mahathir said, was the hosting of the Summit of the Group of 15 here.

"Within our modest resources, we would like to share the experience and expertise in development which may benefit other countries," Dr Mahathir said at a dinner hosted for Fijian Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara and his wife at Sri Perdana here today.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was willing to expand training programmes to include other areas if the training provided so far to the Fijians had been useful.

He said the various changes in economic and political scenes worldwide could best be responded to in a collective manner.

He said Malaysia welcomed initiatives and efforts in establishing dialogue and co-operation between Asean and the South Pacific Forum countries.

"Despite our proximity, there is lack of substance in the relations between the two regional groupings.

"It will be more prudent to limit ourselves to the more practical projects that will contribute to peace and prosperity in our area," Dr Mahathir added.

In the afternoon, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Azlan Shah granted an audience to Ratu Sir

Kamisese and his wife.

In the morning, Ratu Sir Kamisese had a 90-minute meeting with Dr Mahathir.

According to Foreign Ministry deputy secretary-general Datuk Abdul Majid Mohamed, the Fijian Prime Minister told Dr Mahathir that his government was keen to send officials here to study Malaysia's set-up.

Fiji wanted to learn how Malaysia managed the multi-racial society, which was similar to that in Fiji.

Datuk Majid said Ratu Sir Kamisese was also interested in knowing about the political set-up and co-operation among the political parties.

The Fijian Prime Minister later signed an air services agreement with Malaysia for the establishment of direct air links between the two countries.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik signed on Malaysia's behalf.