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Mahathir-trade '''
From Abdul Rahman Sulaiman

(P)

SAO PAULO, June 29, (Bernama) -- Brazilian business leaders have agreed to take steps to help increase Brazil's trade with Malaysia in response to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call to enhance south-south cooperation. *oversea trps.*

This was the outcome of a meeting between the Prime Minister with 15 captains of industries and leading businessmen at his hotel room here Friday.

Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi told Malaysian newsmen here that during the one-hour meeting, the Prime Minister briefed the businessmen and industrialists on various opportunities now available to increase trade not only between Malaysia and Brazil but also between Southeast Asia and the South American continent.

The Prime Minister suggested that Malaysia, Brazil or other Latin American countries be used as entry points into each other's region for their respective exports.

Datuk Ssri Dr Mahathir also told the Brazilians that Malaysia was determined to correct the present trading pattern which he described as +Eurocentric+.-- more

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According to Datuk Abdullah, almost every one present spoke and praised.' Malaysia for its impressive economic achievement.

They also agreed with Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir that one of the problems hindering a speedy improvement of trade between the two regions was lack of adequate sea and air links.

However, this could be developed in time to come.

The Prime Minister had often said during the course of his current visit that the question of increasing- trade between the two parts of the world and the development of a new route termed as the southern route was just like the question of chicken and egg.

During the meeting, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also invited the, Brazilian businessmen to hold a Brazilian week in Kuala Lumpur to introduce their products and culture to Malaysians to enable them to have better understanding of the country.

Malaysian businessmen could also have a similar fair in any of the Brazilian cities, he said.-- more

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The Prime Minister had shown to the world that what he thought could be done had already been done when he personally flew here direct from Kuala Lumpur to Fiji, Easter Island in Tahiti and Chile instead of the traditional route which had to pass either Europe or the United States.

Datuk Abdullah said the Brazilians appeared to have well received the Prime Minister's initiative.

He described the meeting as very encouraging and this augured well for the future.

He said although at present Brazil was Malaysia's largest trading partner in South America, its trade last year, worth US\$328 million (M\$885.6 million) was still small compared with its total trade volume.

Malaysia was determined to improve the situation; he added.

Later, addressing a business seminar attended by about 200 Brazilian businessmen here, the Prime Minister said he was happy at the growing interest among Brazilians in looking for business opportunities in Malaysia.

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Tomorrow, the Prime Minister and his party which includes ministers, Menteri Besar of Perlis Dr Hamid Pawanteh, Melaka Chief Minister Tan Sri Rahim Thamby Chik, senior government officials and about 70 businessmen will leave for Buenos Aires on the last week of his South American tour.

They will be in Argentina for a week on a similar mission before flying home on a chartered Malaysia Airlines DC-10 via the same route it took to come here. -- Bernama

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