

PM: Vast openings in trade with Zimbabwe

Foreign Trips
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From

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HARARE, Wed. — There are vast opportunities for greater economic interaction between Malaysia and Zimbabwe, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"The Malaysian economy which is fast expanding offers good markets for export and a source of supply for Zimbabwe for a broad range of primary and manufactured products," he said.

"In addition, Malaysia can offer Zimbabwe a gateway to the regional market in Southeast Asia and East Asia which is experiencing rapid expansion as a result of buoyant economic conditions there — a region which has recorded one of the fastest growth rates in the world," he said at a dinner hosted by Zimbabwean President Dr Robert Mugabe.

Dr Mahathir arrived here today for a five-day official visit. He is accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali.

He noted the increasing and more intensive contacts and interaction between the people of Malaysia and Zimbabwe.

This had broadened and deepened co-operation in education and training and showed positive results in economic relations.

He told his host that Malaysia was firmly committed to further enhancing its economic and trading ties with Zimbabwe.

"We are therefore equally serious in wanting to share technical expertise with each other," he said.

"This is consistent with our commitment towards realising the full potential of South-South co-operation."

This is Dr Mahathir's third visit to this southern African country of 10.6 million people. He was here for the Non-Aligned Movement's summit in 1986 and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 1991.

One of the highlights of his visit is to open the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair at Bulawayo tomorrow.

His entourage includes International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and a large party of businessmen led by banker Tan Sri Azman Hashim.

Three agreements on the avoidance of double taxation, investment guarantee and air services will be

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Harare's reforms will draw investors

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signed tomorrow.

Dr Mahathir said while these agreements aimed to set the framework for further co-operation, the real impetus to a more intensive and meaningful relationship must come from the respective private sectors.

There were opportunities for investment and joint venture collaboration in such areas as construction, building materials, trans-

port, mining, tourism, pharmaceutical and energy.

He said with the policy reforms being introduced by the Zimbabwean Government to attract foreign investment, he was confident that Zimbabwe would become increasingly attractive to Malaysian investors, many of whom were actively seeking market niches in the world.

On world affairs, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia and

Zimbabwe both sought to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the promotion of economic and social development.

"Our shared aspirations are reflected in our common approaches in the search for an end to the tragic conflicts in many regions of the world," he said.

"Malaysia, like Zimbabwe, is a fervent supporter of the UN in its role to main-

tain international peace and security. We have and continue to support UN peace-keeping efforts.

"While we firmly support the centrality of the UN's role in international affairs, we believe that the process of democratisation of international relations and institutions must not stop short of a restructuring of the UN Security Council to better reflect the changing circumstances of the world today."