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Mahathir-speech

ZIMBABWE INCREASINGLY ATTRACTIVE TO MALAYSIAN INVESTORS

From Zainoor Sulaiman

HARARE, April 28 (Bernama) -- Zimbabwe will become increasingly attractive to Malaysian investors with reforms being introduced by the government, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said last night.

"The opportunities for economic interaction between Malaysia and Zimbabwe are vast," he said in his speech at the official banquet hosted by President Robert Mugabe, here. *overseas trips*

"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," the prime minister said.

In addition, Malaysia could offer a gateway to the regional market in Southeast Asia and east Asia which was experiencing rapid expansion as a result of buoyant economic condition there -- a region which has recorded one of the highest growth rates in the world.

He said Asean, the region's foremost regional organisation, was also making real strides towards the realisation of the Asean Free Trade Area (AFTA) which would further enhance economic development of its member states. -- more

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Mahathir-speech 2 (last) Harare

Stressing Malaysia's firm commitment to further enhancing its economic and trading ties with Zimbabwe, he said the country was equally serious in wanting to share technical expertise with each other, consistent with the commitment towards realising the full potentials of South-South cooperation.

The prime minister said the bilateral agreements on Avoidance of Double Taxation, Investment Guarantee and Air Services scheduled to be signed here tomorrow, would provide the framework for further cooperation, but the real impetus to a more intensive and meaningful relation must come from their respective private sectors.

He said there were opportunities for investment and joint venture collaboration in such areas as construction, building materials, transport, mining, tourism, pharmaceutical and energy.

On international issues, Dr Mahathir said that as members of the U.N., Commonwealth, Non-Aligned Movement, G-77 and G-15, both countries had sought to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of economic and social development worldwide.

He reiterated that while Malaysia firmly supported the centrality of the UN's role in international affairs, it believed that the process of democratisation of international relations should not stop short of a restructuring of the UN Security Council to better reflect the changing circumstances of the world today. -- Bernama

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