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Mahathir-Reconstruction

MALAYSIA OFFERS CREDIT FACILITY FOR BOSNIA TO PURCHASE PALM OIL

By: Moktar Hussain

SARAJEVO, April 20 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is offering a US\$5 million credit facility to Bosnia-Herzegovina to purchase 8,000 tonnes of palm oil as part of its assistance in the reconstruction of the war-ravaged Balkan state.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia was also prepared to have a bilateral payment arrangement (BPA) to facilitate trade relations between Malaysia and Bosnia.

He said the government had also urged the private sector to look into ways which they could help in the reconstruction process including in the development of housing projects.

"As of housing, because there is a shortage of capital here, they would have to bring some capital before they could help repair houses or build new ones," he said at a joint press conference with his counterpart, Dr Hassan Muratovic, here.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali and his delegation of top businessmen and senior officials, is on his second leg of a four-day tour of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia to promote trade ties and reconstruction of the war-torn state.

The Prime Minister said that two Bosnian officials would visit Malaysia for attachment with the Malaysian External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) to undergo training.

He said he also discussed with Muratovic during their four-eyed meeting the political situation in the country particularly the implementation of the Dayton Peace agreement.

"We support the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina and its territorial right. We support its desire to have a government that is multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-religious with the involvement of all irrespective of whether they are Muslims or Croats or Serbs," he said.

The Dayton Peace Agreement stipulates that Bosnia and Herzegovina will remain an internationally recognised country to be divided into two entities -- Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republika Srpska.

Dr Mahathir also present a donation of RM3.25 million, collected by students and teachers in Malaysia, to Muratovic for the rehabilitation of a school in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Muratovic said his government had identified areas in which Malaysian businessmen could participate such as the timber-based industry and housing.

He also denied that the reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina would be dominated by American companies due to their close links with the World Bank.

"Everybody is welcomed... we will be open to all," he said. -- Bernama

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