

05 SEP 1996

Abdullah-Malawi

MALAYSIA OFFERS TO HELP MALAWI UPGRADE TRANSPORT SYSTEM

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 5 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has offered to help land-locked Malawi upgrade its transport system, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad made the offer in talks with visiting Malawi President Dr Bakili Muluzi here.

In the absence of direct air links, trade with Malawi was now via third countries, he said.

Abdullah was briefing reporters on the talks between Dr Muluzi and Dr Mahathir at the Prime Minister's Department here.

The two leaders also witnessed the signing of two agreements between Malaysia and Malawi.

The agreements on trade and investment promotion and guarantee were signed by the Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and Malawi's Minister of Commerce and Industry Chakakala Chadziya.

The agreements would facilitate cooperation between Malawi and Malaysia in transport, telecommunication, agriculture, tourism and broadcasting, Abdullah said.

Cooperation in the area of transport would cover upgrading that country's land and air links, he said.

"Now it is for airline companies and other relevant bodies here to undertake viability studies on the proposal to upgrade that country's transport system," he said.

Abdullah said Malaysia also offered training facilities to Malawi in fields which were necessary for its development purposes.

Malawi wanted to make Malaysia a model for its development strategy, he added.

In the area of broadcasting, Abdullah said Malaysia and Malawi would also exchange films so that the peoples of the two countries would know each other better.

On telecommunications, he said the Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Minister Datuk Leo Moggie had visited Malawi to discuss cooperation in this area.

Last year, Telekom Malaysia signed an agreement with the Malawi Post and Telecommunication Corporation to implement a general telecommunication service, cellular telephone service and data network, he said.

Abdullah said trade between Malaysia and Malawi at present was small -- only about RM1.87 million last year.

Malaysia's exports to Malawi last year included printed materials, alcohol, clothing and automatic data processing machines and imported about half a million ringgit worth of goods from that country such as vegetables, edible oil and fruits. -- BERNAMA

RAZ AAM