

21 NOV 1996

Mahathir-Peru

MALAYSIA SUPPORTS PERU'S ADMISSION TO APEC

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 21 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed Malaysia's readiness to support Peru's admission to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) forum.

Briefing reporters on the Prime Minister's talks with Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori here today, Rural Development Minister Datuk Annuar Musa said Dr Mahathir conveyed Malaysia's readiness to the President during the meeting.

Malaysia felt that Apec should not be an exclusive club and all countries of the Asia-Pacific Rim should have the right to be members irrespective of their economic condition.

Malaysia had also expressed its support for Vietnam's admission.

Dr Mahathir and President Fujimori agreed that non-economic matters such as labour, human rights and the environment should not be turned into issues which could influence the decisions at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting in Singapore next month.

The two leaders also discussed bilateral cooperation in the forestry, agricultural, trade and tourism fields.

Peru was keen on adopting Malaysia's sustainable timber development policy and invited Malaysians to introduce sustainable logging there.

The President felt Malaysia could serve as a model for Peru in the area of selective logging and replacement of forests with oil palm and rubber.

They also discussed the imbalance in bilateral trade but they felt this was not a problem as this could be rectified gradually, Annuar said.

Malaysia-Peru trade last year totalled RM256.1 million with Malaysia's imports from the Latin American nation totalling RM224.4 million and exports amounting to RM31.7 million.

Malaysia also requested landing rights in Lima, Peru's capital, for Malaysia Airlines which now served Buenos Aires.

Both leaders also witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Malaysian Foreign Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) and the Commission for the Promotion of Exports of The Republic of Peru (PROMPEX) to facilitate mutual cooperation on trade promotion.

Peru's Education Minister Domingo Palermo signed for Prompex while Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry Kerk Choo Ting signed for Matrade.

President Fujimori arrived here yesterday for a three-day official visit. -- BERNAMA

RAZ JM AAM