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Mahathir-Dinner

MALAYSIA TO HELP KYRGYZ REPUBLIC INTEGRATE WITH GLOBAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM

By: Rachman Nordin

BISHKEK, July 15 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight Malaysia is ready to cooperate with the Kyrgyz Republic in integrating with the global economic system, a process which, he said, will be difficult but essential.

"Malaysia is sensitive to the aspirations of countries like the Kyrgyz Republic which are making the difficult transformation to a market-type economy. Malaysia's own experience may be of use to the process," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at a state dinner hosted by President Askar Akayev on the occasion of the Malaysian Prime Minister's official visit to the republic beginning today.

Dr Mahathir said the process of integrating with the international system would be made considerably less difficult with regular and close consultations between both countries and both regions.

"We hope the leading industrial powers and multilateral lending institutions will be sensitive to these difficulties," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there was good potential for bilateral cooperation, especially in the context of the transformation to a market-type economy in the Kyrgyz Republic and other countries in the Central Asian region.

He said that while the prospects were excellent, there were, however, challenges in integrating the two regions' economies with those of the advanced industrial nations and the global economic system.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had found privatisation to be a great help in achieving its development goals, especially in the face of the limited resources available to the government.

"This may also apply here," he said, adding that certain key areas for cooperation between the public sectors of the two countries had also been identified.

He was pleased that there have been contacts between Malaysia's Economic Planning Unit and the Kyrgyz Ministry of Economy.

These consultations were useful in laying the groundwork for the realisation of some partnership and exchanges of experience and knowledge in public service and administration.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia's private sector, which has prominent representatives in the business delegation that is accompanying him on this trip, had considerable expertise in various areas for direct bilateral cooperation in mining, tourism, infrastructure development and the establishment of economic zones.

He hoped the visit and future exchanges of visit at various levels would enable the private sectors of both countries to undertake projects and joint ventures for mutual benefits.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia and Kyrgyz Republic, one located in the southeast and the other in the central Asian region, are well placed strategically to act as a conduit for channelling the goods and services of both nations to other countries in the respective regions.

In his welcoming address, President Akayev said a blend between Malaysian knowhow and high technologies and highly qualified Kyrgyz specialists could provide the basis for successful cooperation between the two countries.

He said he was confident of the establishment of new joint ventures both in the Kyrgyz Republic and Malaysia, especially in such areas as mining, electronics and light industry, tourism and processing of

agricultural products.

He said the Kyrgyz Republic was ready for employment in Malaysia of its engineers, doctors, scientists and coaches.

President Akayev said: "We are grateful to Malaysia for providing opportunities to our young people to study at famous Malaysian universities under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme."

Kyrgyz specialists, educated and trained through grants made available by the Malaysian government, would contribute greatly to the development "of our young sovereign Kyrgystan".

President Akayev said that in spite of the short history of bilateral relations, his country and Malaysia shared many identical views on current global issues, importantly an inspiration to global stability and prosperity.

He said his country paid special attention to the development of both bilateral and multilateral relations with Muslim countries within the framework of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), among other organisations.

Seventy per cent of Kyrgyz Republic's population of about 5 million are Muslims.

Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Madam Akayev, Malaysian Cabinet ministers, menteri besar and senior officials as well as their Kyrgyz counterparts were also present. -- BERNAMA

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