

18 JAN 1996

Mahathir-Canada (Pix)

MALAYSIA WELCOMES CANADIAN COOPERATION

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 18 (Bernama) -- Malaysia welcomes Canadian collaboration with ASEAN's development efforts as well as its participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said with Socialist Vietnam now a member of ASEAN, the grouping was optimistic that it would soon become a family of ten countries, collectively a rich market and blessed with abundant resources.

"With growing prosperity, the ASEAN Ten will be a bigger anchor for peace and stability for the entire region. It speaks highly of Canada for having the foresight to be engaged as a dialogue partner from an early date," he said at a dinner in honour of Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien at Sri Perdana here.

He said Canadian collaboration and participation had been done on the basis of partnership and full respect for the sensitivity and interest of ASEAN.

"This is the way we expect of all those who wish to cooperate with ASEAN," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia needed a large pool of trained and skilful professionals in its quest to become a developed nation by 2020.

With the next century just around the corner, he said, the momentum of economic development and industrialisation was expected to increase, opening up new opportunities for foreign investment and participation.

"The door for Canadian participation is always wide open," he said.

He said with the reservoir of goodwill and understanding generated through years of close cooperation, a strong foundation had been built on which Malaysia and Canada could further intensify their relations.

The Prime Minister said besides bilateral cooperation, both countries had also been closely engaged in common endeavours in the interantional arena.

"We share many common interests, ranging from the need to strengthen the role of the United Nations as a factor of global peace and stability to the specific need to foster cooperative peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region," Dr Mahathir added.

In his speech, Chretien commended Malaysia for the changes in the country which had turned it into a modern and outward-looking Islamic country.

He said there was a lot of potential to develop even stronger links between the two countries.

Chretien hoped that Malaysia would send more students to Canada to take advantage of his country's world-class universities and technical colleges.

-- Bernama