

20 OCT 1996

Abdullah-Viet

MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE IN VIETNAM DEVELOPMENT

By: Mohd Ghazemy Mahmud

HO CHI MINH CITY, Oct 20 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will continue to assist Vietnam in its development efforts and further enhance bilateral relationship, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

He said that the present level of bilateral ties was excellent including the unique relationship between ruling parties of both countries.

"Malaysia will continue to assist Vietnam in whatever way we can in the various aspects of development," he told Malaysian reporters at a news conference here to mark the end of his four-day official visit to this socialist country.

He said during discussions with the top officials here, it was indicated that Vietnam had learned much from the Malaysian experience in national development.

The Vietnamese side also welcomed more Malaysian business ventures and investment including in the building and construction industry as the government here was embarking on a major housing programme especially for the poor in the urban areas, he said.

"Malaysian companies should take up this opportunity in Vietnam's development efforts," he added.

Earlier, he attended a luncheon hosted by the Malaysian Club of Ho Chi Minh City at a hotel here where he also witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Teik Tatt Holding of Malaysia and Vietnam's Suoi Tien Company to develop a theme park here.

The Foreign Minister, accompanied by a 30-member delegation including businessmen, arrived in Hanoi Thursday for high-level talks with top Vietnamese government officials. Vietnam is the first leg of his tour which include visits to Myanmar and Cambodia.

In the capital city, Abdullah jointly chaired the two-day second Malaysia-Vietnam Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) along with his counterpart Nguyen Manh Cam.

On the JCM, he said, both sides had identified new areas of cooperation to expand on the existing ties.

This include a proposal to set up a joint committee on agricultural cooperation and formalise cooperation in banking and finance particularly in training, he added.

He said one outstanding issue in the past that was an irritant was the boat people problem and added that that matter had been resolved except for the remaining 17 boat people with "nationality status" problems.

The agenda of the JCM covered all aspects of relations between Malaysia and Vietnam, the youngest Asean partner which joined the regional grouping in July last year.

In Hanoi, Abdullah made courtesy calls on Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet and General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Do Moi. In Ho Chi Minh City, the Foreign Minister had discussions with the city's Acting Chairman of the People's Committee Vo Viet Thanh.

Malaysia is the seventh largest investor with a total of about US\$920 million in 49 projects.

Since establishing its resident embassy in Hanoi in 1976, Malaysia-Vietnam relations improved steadily in particular over the last few years reflected in the exchange of a number of high level visits involving the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet and party leader Do

Moi.

The inaugural meeting of the Malaysia-Vietnam Joint Commission was held in Kuala Lumpur in September last year, two months after Communist Vietnam joined Asean. -- BERNAMA

MGM RM