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Television

M'SIA-GHANA TV VENTURE TAKES OFF IN RECORD TIME

By: Rachman Nordin

ACCRA (Ghana), Nov 9 (Bernama) -- The opening of the office of Gama Media Systems Limited (GMS) by Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad here late Friday marked the first ever partnership between Malaysia and Ghana in television, cinema and audio production which materialised in record time of five months.

Ghanaian Information Minister Kofi Totobi Quakyi said in endorsing the project, his government drew inspiration from Dr Mahathir's aggressive promotion of South-South cooperation.

"The Ghanaian government views the joint venture as an important effort to speak to each other and deepen contact between the people of both countries," Quakyi said at the function where Dr Mahathir also unveiled the joint venture company's logo.

Quakyi said it only took two visits by him to Kuala Lumpur and two visits by his Malaysian counterpart Datuk Mohamed Rahmat to Accra for the project to materialise.

TV3 or Sistem Televisyen Malaysia Berhad (STMB), the operator of Malaysia's first commercial television station controls GMS through Gama Media International (GMI) which is TV3's first venture abroad.

TV3 managing director Zahari Omar said the venture proved that the Malaysian government's privatisation policy had been internationally recognised and had become a model for many countries.

In fact, TV3 which is 12 years old now, owed its very existence to the policy which Dr Mahathir implemented since the early 80s, Zahari said.

For its Ghana operations, GMI has set up three companies namely TV3 Network Limited, which will start the country's first commercial television station before June next year, Cable View Network Limited is to start a pay-TV station and GMS itself to operate Ghana's nationwide FM radio station.

Zahari said his company intended to contribute to the development of Ghana's information and entertainment industry and make it among the best in West Africa.

GMS and the Ghanaian government have also formed a 70-30 joint venture company involving a US\$2 million investment (RM5 million) to acquire the assets of the State-owned Ghana Film Industry Corporation (GFIC).

Zahari assured the Ghanaian government that the new company to be known as Gama Film Company would absorb all existing GFIC employees. -- BERNAMA

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