

26 MAR 1996

Mahathir-holiday

M'SIA AND NEW ZEALAND SEAL YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

WELLINGTON, March 26 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and New Zealand today concluded a special agreement providing for a unique programme of youth exchange which is expected to help enhance understanding between the peoples of the two countries.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the 'Working Holiday Arrangement' was signed by Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and the New Zealand Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Don McKinnon.

The agreement provides for young Malaysians and New Zealanders between the ages of 18 and 30 to holiday in each other's country for up to six months and while there to engage in employment to supplement their travel expenses.

This programme was mooted by Prime Minister Jim Bolger when he visited Malaysia in 1994.

The agreement was one of four signed here in conjunction with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Moahamad's four-day official visit here beginning today.

Dr Mahathir, who witnessed the signing of the agreements with Bolger at Parliament House, later said Malaysia fully supported Bolger's idea and hoped that the programme could be implemented as soon as possible.

The three other documents signed were on education cooperation, defence and assistance from TV New Zealand (TVNZ) to Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM).

The education cooperation MoU is to facilitate the development of contacts and cooperation between educational institutions in both countries and covers such matters as the twinning programmes of universities and the recognition of degrees.

It was signed by Najib and his counterpart Wyatt Creech.

The defence cooperation arrangement was signed by Defence Ministry Secretary-General Datuk Azizan Hussain and New Zealand Defence Secretary Gerald Hensley.

Under the arrangement, a Malaysia-New Zealand Defence Coordinating Group is to be set up to look after all ongoing activities.

The two countries have long-standing cooperation in defence matters, both being partners in the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) together with Britain, Australia and Singapore.

The MoU on broadcasting signed by Information Ministry Secretary-General Datuk Zawawi Mahmuddin and TVNZ chairman Norman Geary is to get TVNZ to help RTM in playing the role of host broadcaster for the 1998 Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur. -- Bernama

Sj/am JK