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Mahathir-Dinner

SUCCESS OF VENTURES KEY TO MALAYSIA-GUINEA PARTNERSHIP, SAYS PM

By: Rachman Nordin

CONAKRY (Guinea), Nov 6 (Bernama) -- Malaysia considers it important for its ventures in Guinea, which include a bank, to succeed so as to lay the foundation for a concrete partnership between both countries, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia's desire has always been to concretise the already cordial relations between the two countries, which are members of the G-77 and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), by venturing into trade, investment and development, among others.

"It is with this larger objective that there is a friendly invasion of Guinea by so many Malaysian businessmen," Dr Mahathir said on Wednesday at a state banquet hosted by Guinean President Lansana Conte on the second day of a four-day official visit to the west African country.

Besides the International Commercial Bank Limited, Malaysian interests here include Telekom Malaysia's majority stake in Guinea's newly privatised communications company Sotelgui and Telekom Malaysia's collaboration with the University of Conakry in research and development.

Dr Mahathir opened the bank earlier today and is scheduled to launch Sotelgui's new exchange tomorrow.

The Prime Minister also assured Conte that he constantly reminds Malaysian companies doing business overseas to be good corporate citizens, respect local sensitivities and go for long-term benefits rather than short-term gains.

Dr Mahathir also spoke of the considerable scope for training in Malaysia for Guineans, who he said should avail themselves of short courses in diplomacy, public administration, agriculture and environment protection under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP).

He invited them to apply through the MTCP to take up long-term courses in Malaysian tertiary institutions such as the International Islamic University.

About 85 per cent of Guinea's seven million people are Muslim.

Dr Mahathir's visit is to reciprocate one made by Conte to Malaysia in September last year.

Malaysia and Guinea will sign several agreements on investment guarantee and partial abolition of visa tomorrow to create a better trade and investment climate as well as enhance interaction between them. --

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