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ANWAR REITERATES MALAYSIA'S SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT IN MUSLIM MINDANAO

ZAMBOANGA CITY, April 4 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today reiterated Malaysia's commitment to contribute towards the progress of the autonomous region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

ARMM comprises the provinces of Maguindanao, LanaodullSur, Sulu and Tawai-Tawai.

Speaking at a luncheon address hosted by ARRM governor, Nur Misuari and other local dignatories here, he said Malaysia subscribed to the "enrich thye neighbour" idea which has been consistently promoted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Anwar said Dr Mahathir believed that if Malaysia were to progress it also had to enrich its neighbours.

Communities that were marginalised or exploited would not be able to have stability and confidence and one also could not expect them to have the same aspirations as others who were not marginalised, he said.

Anwar, who is also accompanied by a number of Malaysian businessmen, said he was encouraged with the pace of development taking place in ARRM.

He said much more needed to be done and those involved in its development should work at a faster rate in order to make up for lost time caused by more than two decades of insurgency which only ended late last year.

Anwar also reminded Malaysian businessmen not to be discouraged by one or two unpleasant episodes in their business dealings and should look at the wider picture of opportunities in ARRM.

"There has been one or two problems here and there, otherwise the world would not be as exciting. This is what politicians are for, to give more excitment, as long as the excitment does not cause too much obstacles or difficulties. Otherwise it adds colour and character," he quipped.

Anwar also called on businessmen to be caring in their attitude and look into the welfare of workers and their families by providing more than in terms of wages.

He also hoped that the Philippines authorities would give support and encouragement because the extent of the commitment by businessmen would depend on the amount of peace dividend. -- BERNAMA

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