

13/09/1997

Dr M presents economic development study to Kyrgystan President

Rose Ismail in Bishkek, Kyrgystan

A COMPREHENSIVE economic study, a road map for the economic development of Kyrgystan highlighting 11 sectors needing specific attention, was presented by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday to the President of the republic, Askar Akayev.

The study, conducted by senior Malaysian and Kyrgyz government officers within a year, will help the central Asian republic in its difficult transition to a market-type economy.

Dr Mahathir, who is here for a working visit, was pleased with the close interaction and constant consultation which took place between the two sides in the gathering of information for the report.

He said it might not answer all questions but the report offered "the wealth of our development experience in Malaysia."

Although no elaboration was given on which sectors needed the most attention, it is assumed that they revolve around areas Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was most willing to offer training.

They are the banking and financial sectors and the fiscal system, legal and constitutional affairs, trade and industry and the energy, agricultural and transportation sectors.

The Kyrgyz President, who received the report at the Government House yesterday morning, described it as a "precious gift".

He thanked Malaysia profusely for the concerted effort shown by the country to assist the republic as well as for agreeing to be a partner in the implementation of the report.

He announced that a joint committee would be set up immediately to work on details of the report and that a fund would also be created to send Kyrgystanis for training in Malaysia.

Akayev also declared that the report would be named after Dr Mahathir.

The Prime Minister is here with his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

From chilly Mongolia, he arrived in the sun-drenched city of Bishkek on Thursday, bringing with him a 170-member delegation of Ministers, a Deputy Minister, a Chief Minister, nine Members of Parliament, senior civil servants and businessmen.

It was during his first visit in July here last year that proposals were made to begin a study on the future economic directions of Kyrgystan.

In his speech yesterday, Dr Mahathir said the study encouraged the maximisation of limited resources. And the only way to do this was to ensure that the development of one sector supported the development of another.

The study, he added, should serve as a complement and supplement to the numerous studies already carried out by various agencies and international organisations for the republic.

To fully maximise the potential of the study, the Prime Minister said mind-sets and attitudes had to change in the face of challenges.

"A sense of urgency has to be inculcated; there has to be an openness of mind to new and better ways of doing things. There has to be courage in trying out new ideas.

"There will be failures of course, but I hope we do not allow those mistakes to discourage us from learning and trying again."

The Prime Minister also explained the way in which Malaysia could effectively contribute to the republic's development.

As a "fellow developing country", he said Malaysia's resources were naturally limited.

Therefore, the best form of assistance would be in the area of training and the sharing of experience, including hands-on training.

As it is, Dr Mahathir said, 15 Kyrgyz government officials had already undergone training under the Malaysian Technical Co-operation Programme.

After the presentation ceremony, the two leaders witnessed the signing of the Complementary Agreement on Economic Agreement between the Economic Planning Unit and the Kyrgyz Finance Ministry.

The EPU was represented by its director-general, Tan Sri Ali Abul Hassan Sulaiman, while Kyrgystan was represented by Minister Toalaybek Koychumanov.

(END)