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Mahathir-Chissano

FIND OUT EXPERTISE OF M'SIAN FIRMS, MAHATHIR ASKS MOZAMBIQUE

KUALA LUMPUR, March 20 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today asked countries like Mozambique which enlist the services of Malaysian companies to undertake mega projects in their countries to ascertain whether the firms had the required expertise for the job.

The Prime Minister wants the countries to verify with Malaysian embassies or missions in their respective countries or nearest to them to ensure they were bona fide firms.

This was necessary as there were cases of Malaysian companies which secured projects abroad could not implement them and there were also companies awarded projects tried to "sell" them to other companies in Malaysia for a "certain price".

Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said this was the first time that Dr Mahathir had explained the matter during his discussions with a leader of a foreign country -- Mozambique president Joaquim Alberto Chissano -- during the delegation meeting at the Prime Minister's Department.

In this regard, Abdullah said he would direct Malaysian embassies and high commissions to request the host governments to determine the capabilities and status of the Malaysian companies which undertake mega projects in their countries.

"We want to ensure Malaysian companies offering to carry out projects in foreign countries to be bona fide and have the required expertise," he said when briefing reporters on discussions between Dr Mahathir and Chissano.

Chissano, arrived here yesterday leading a 34-member delegation comprising several ministers, on a four-day official visit to Malaysia.

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir informed Chissano that his government should contact the Malaysian Embassy in Zimbabwe (Malaysia does not have an embassy in Mozambique) or liaise directly with Kuala Lumpur to obtain information on Malaysian companies bidding for projects in that country.

"This is to curb Malaysian businessmen from taking advantage of new investment opportunities in Mozambique to make all kinds of promises and proposals but have no intention to execute the projects as they are devoid of expertise and capabilities," he said.

He said Dr Mahathir regarded such ways as unhealthy because "if Malaysia wants to be a partner in the development of a friendly nation, it must recommend credible companies which could deliver the projects on time and in accordance with the stipulated time and objectives of the project."

The move was to protect Malaysia's image and economic ties with other countries, he said.

"We do not want Malaysian companies to be disappointed with the own doing of its private sector or businessmen who are good in making sweet promises but cannot deliver what they have promised," he said.

Abdullah, however, did not name the companies or businessmen involved in such unhealthy practices.

Yesterday, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said the Cabinet had decided that Malaysian companies wishing to sign Memorandum of Understanding with a company with foreign interests need to register with the Malaysian Embassy and trade office.

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir gave an assurance to Chissano that he would get Malaysian firms to venture into the agricultural, logging,

infrastructure and natural resources sectors in Mozambique.

He said Malaysia would also offer courses in entrepreneurial skills to Mozambique nationals under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme.

Dr Mahathir and Chissano also discussed ways to enhance cooperation between Asean and South African Development Cooperation, he added. --

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