

31 JUL 1997

Lesotho-Embassy

LESOTHO TO OPEN EMBASSY IN MALAYSIA

By: R. Ravichandran

LANGKAWI, July 31 (Bernama) -- The African kingdom of Lesotho will open an embassy in Malaysia by the end of the year, its Deputy Prime Minister Prof. Pakalitha Mosisili said.

"We see Malaysia as a strong role model...Malaysia has become an important trade and economic hub in this region from which we can benefit and learn a lot," he told Bernama.

Prof. Mosisili, who was here to attend the Langkawi International Dialogue which ended yesterday, would begin a four-day official visit of Malaysia tomorrow.

He said Lesotho currently had diplomatic missions in 10 countries - Belgium, Britain, China, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Italy, South Africa, United States and a mission in the United Nations.

The ambassador to China is also accredited to Malaysia, he said.

Prof. Mosisili said the setting-up of a mission here would boost trade between the two countries as currently there was no direct trade relations between them.

"It will also help Malaysian investors to identify investment potentials in Lesotho and bring about a friendly relationship between our two countries," he said.

Prof. Mosisili said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, with whom he had a bilateral meeting two days ago, was a "visionary and an outstanding leader".

"We could learn a lot from Malaysia's experiences and its development policies under the strong leadership of your Prime Minister," he said

Lesotho, a sovereign country with a population of two million and an area of 30,355 sq km, has a unique characteristic of being totally surrounded by South Africa. It is one of three remaining monarchies in Africa.

Often referred to as the "Switzerland of Africa" for its unique beauty and snow-capped mountains, it gained independence in 1966 and is a member of the Commonwealth and the Southern Africa Development Community. --

BERNAMA

RV SK