

07/05/1997

Malaysia to attend meet on assistance to Djibouti

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MALAYSIA is likely to send a representative to the two-day Roundtable Conference on Aid to Djibouti beginning May 29.

This assurance was given by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to Djibouti's Foreign Minister and International Relations Mohamed Moussa Chehem during their 40-minute meeting at Anwar's office yesterday.

Djibouti President Hassan Gouled Aptidon, in his letter to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, has sought Malaysia's help to lobby other Association of South-East Asian Nations members to participate in the conference and provide assistance to Djibouti, Foreign Ministry Undersecretary for South-East Asia and South Pacific, Encik Mohamed Arshad Hussein, told reporters.

Arshad said Djibouti has also sought Malaysia's help to secure loans from the Islamic Development Bank, where Malaysia is a board member, to finance the purchase of power generators.

Anwar told Mohamed Moussa he will encourage Malaysian ministers and private sector to visit Djibouti and explore business opportunities there.

Djibouti has invited Malaysian businessmen to invest in its infrastructure projects, particularly ports, airports and telecommunications.

Arshad said Djibouti also intends to set up a free trade zone which could be used as a gateway into North-East African and West Asian region.

Djibouti currently enjoys a strong entreport trade.

However, Arshad said between Malaysia and Djibouti is small, totalling less than R12 million. The main export from Malaysia to the republic is palm oil.

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