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Agong-Mandela

MALAYSIA TO COOPERATE IN EVERY WAY, SAYS TUANKU JA'AFAR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 6 (Bernama) -- Yang Di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar said tonight Malaysia will endeavour to cooperate with South Africa in every way, particularly in the establishment of bilateral and regional linkages.

He said relations between Malaysia and South Africa were excellent and while trade between them was still relatively modest, with the potential for growth evident.

The Malaysian private sector found South Africa to be one of the most attractive investment destinations and was confident that South Africa had all the ingredients of an African tiger economy, he said at a state banquet in honour of South African President Nelson Mandela at Istana Negara, here.

Present were Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Najihah, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, and cabinet ministers.

Mandela arrived today leading a 115-member delegation, including ministers, senior officials and businessmen, for a five-day visit, the final leg of his four-nation Asian tour. He had visited Singapore, Brunei and the Philippines.

Tuanku Ja'afar said both sides must strive for cooperation between Asean and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

"Like Asean, we believe that South Africa's integration with the countries of the SADC will be a model of confidence-building, peace and prosperity,"

He said Malaysia admired the South African government's high sense of commitment to build a future based on justice and the sharing of the hopes, aspirations and ideals of the African people.

Malaysia followed with keen interest the initiatives of South Africa towards cooperation and integration between neighbours, he said, adding: "We are confident that South Africa, which has already impressed the world by its capacity to initiate peaceful change, will now be able to usher in peace and prosperity in Africa as a whole."

"Over such a short period since the establishment of the new South Africa, new social institutions have replaced flawed ones. The integration process is taking place in schools and universities and the economy too is undergoing a comprehensive restructuring," he said.

Tuanku Ja'afar said Malaysia welcomed the birth of a multiracial and democratic South Africa and Mandela's "long walk to freedom" was a source of inspiration to mankind.

-- BERNAMA