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MISSION OF PEACE, GOODWILL AND HARMONY TO AFRICA ON FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE

SHAH ALAM, Aug 29 (Bernama) -- Sixteen four-wheel drives carrying Malaysian flags will embark on a 17,000 overland expedition in Africa in December in a mission to strengthen the bond of friendship between Malaysia and African countries.

The Silverstone TransAfrica 4x4 Expedition, dubbed the Malaysian Mission of Peace, Goodwill and Harmony to Africa, was launched here today by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The journey will be flagged off by South African President Nelson Mandela in Capetown on Dec 1 and is expected to end in the Egyptian capital of Cairo 33 days later.

The vehicles will travel through 12 African nations namely South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan and Egypt.

Speaking at the ceremony, Abdullah thanked the several African diplomats present for the enthusiasm shown by their countries towards the project of which Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is the patron.

Expedition advisor, Jen Tan Sri Zain Hashim said four of the vehicles would take part in the National Day celebrations parade on Sunday.

"The expedition seeks to learn about our African brothers, their land, history, culture and aspirations. In return, we hope they will learn about us," said George Wong, expedition organising chairman.

--BERNAMA

MAM ABG