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#### MONGOLIA CAN BE DISTRIBUTION CENTRE FOR M'SIAN GOODS

By: Zulkefli Salleh

ULAN BATOR, Sept 11 (Bernama) -- Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said Mongolia has the potential to become the distribution centre for Malaysian goods for markets in east Russia and west China.

"The Malaysian private sector should not look at Mongolia as only Mongolia but as a distribution centre for two large markets which have potentials," she said last night.

She was briefing Malaysian reporters on the round-up of a meeting held following the visit of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad here. The Prime Minister had chaired a meeting between government officers and members of Malaysia's trade delegation.

It was suggested that the Malaysian private sector utilise the tax-free warehouse facility set up by a Mongolian-Malaysian joint venture company at the Mongolian-Russian border and Mongolian-China border, not only to distribute goods brought in from outside of Mongolia, but goods which could be assembled in Mongolia and subsequently taken out.

Mongolia has undertaken a study on the market potential of goods from east Russia and this could be used by Malaysia to identify the potential of such goods

Malaysian entrepreneurs were also asked to set up joint ventures or consortium with their Mongolian partners to exploit the country's mineral resources, including the large deposits of coal, which could be marketed to China, she said.

"If we are able to get coal-mining concession it can be transported by train, which could be owned by us, using railway in Mongolia to China and also to their ports to be shipped to Japan," she said.

She said it has been proposed that Malaysian companies, such as Malaysia Electric Corporation (MEC) identify their products which could be assembled in Mongolia, to be marketed in Mongolia as well as its neighbouring countries.

Rafidah said Mongolia still did not have its own manufacturing industry and that most of its consumer products were imported. They also needed labour intensive industry to address the country's high unemployment rate, which has reached nearly 29 percent.

She said Mongolian entrepreneurs which met Malaysian business delegates during Dr Mahathir's visit to the country, had voiced out their intention to their potential joint venture partners, to come to Kuala Lumpur to follow-up on the projects discussed.

She said film producers such as HVD, has agreed to develop cooperation with Mongolian authorities to produce television programmes.

Mongolia had also requested Malaysia to identify tourism projects which could be developed in the country, she said.

There were also potentials for Malaysian private sector to undertake housing development for Mongolian or foreigners in that country, she said.

"What is more important, Mongolia has to be seen more positively in long-term basis because it started practising open market policy only within these three years," she said.

The move made by Mongolia to be a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) meant that the country has streamlined its trade regime so that it would be in line with that practised by other countries in the world, and as such Malaysian private sector should have confident in such

an effort," she said. -- BERNAMA  
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