

12 OCT 1998

Agong-Swaziland

ACT TOGETHER TO FACE THE NEW MILLENNIUM, SAYS AGONG

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 12 (Bernama) -- The Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Tuanku Ja'afar, said tonight it is important for countries of the South to understand the challenges of the modern economy and to work together to face the new millennium.

"We need not continue to depend on the power-that-be for charitable sustenance and if necessary, we need to challenge the orthodoxies of modern economic dialogue," he said at a state banquet in honour of King Mswati III and Queen Inkhosikati LaNgangaza of Swaziland at Istana Negara, here.

By working together and collaborating fully on all vital and pressing issues of the time, both countries could create a smart way to overcome whatever challenges that would be faced, he said.

Southern Africa, with its growing manufacturing sector, fast improving infrastructure and mineral resource richness, had become a region of choice for the Malaysian private sector in recent years, he said.

Tuanku Ja'afar said ties between the two countries could also be enhanced through cultural exchanges and active participation in music, arts and cultural and sporting activities.

He was also hopeful that the visit by King Mswati would help both countries to build a partnership and establish dialogue.

King Mswati, in his speech, said although Malaysia was not spared from being hit by the recent economic downturn in Asia, the factors and qualities that made Malaysia so successful in the past years were still very much in place.

"Therefore, we feel that in a matter of time, Malaysia will return to the pattern of its strong economic growth, these are examples of confidence, not despair and they point clearly to a future full of optimism," he added.

He was hopeful that Malaysian companies would take profitable advantage of the country's investment potential in areas such as tourism, manufacturing, agriculture and other industries.

Swaziland, sandwiched between Mozambique and South Africa, gained independence from Britain in 1968.

With a population about 900,000, it is a predominantly agricultural country which also exports asbestos, coal and iron ore.

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

-- BERNAMA

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