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AUSSIES HAVE CONFIDENCE IN MALAYSIA, SAYS HIGH COMMISSIONER

By: Neville D'Cruz

MELBOURNE, March 18 (Bernama) -- Despite the regional financial slowdown, the Australian business community has continued to show confidence in Malaysia's economic future, Malaysian High Commissioner in Canberra, Datuk Adnan Othman said in the city of Wodonga today.

Speaking at the launch of the Hume Chapter of the Australia-Malaysia Business Council (AMBC), Adnan urged members of the new chapter, who has been active in the past two years in bilateral trade with Malaysia, to seize the opportunities now available and to form strategic alliances and smart partnerships with their Malaysian partners.

"It is one of my pleasant tasks to facilitate in every way we possibly can to promote close, friendly and mutually rewarding relationship between our two countries," he said.

Adnan said AMBC had "always played an instrumental and effective role to enhance relations between Malaysia and Australia particularly in trade and investment."

Noting the Hume Chapter was the first to be established outside the Australian state capitals, Adnan said: "It demonstrates the deep and widespread Australian interest in Malaysia, particularly among business circles.

The Hume Chapter will serve southern NSW and north-east Victoria which has many well established small to medium enterprise manufacturers and service providers. It is situated half-way between Melbourne and Sydney.

Chapter chairman Charles Stitz recalled a tour a trade delegation from the region made to the northern states of Malaysia last March. "We were tremendously impressed by the energy and dedication of the Malaysian people and by the development which they have achieved in such a relatively short period under the leadership of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad," he said.

"We were also touched by the way in which we were received wherever we went. People at all levels were open and friendly to us and went out of their way to make us feel welcome.

"The atmosphere generally was one of progress and 'can do' and everywhere we saw tangible evidence of that progress and more importantly, the will to continue to progress and to prosper.

"So we came back from that very busy week liking what we had seen, and convinced that there were very real business and cultural opportunities in Malaysia for Australia in general and for this region of southern Australia in particular."

Stitz, a solicitor in Wodonga, about 420km from Canberra, the Malaysian Federal and State governments, were "clearly prepared to encourage development by providing tangible assistance in the form of tax breaks, subsidies and support for the impressive State Development Corporations."

-- BERNAMA

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