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KL remains committed to South ties

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MALAYSIA'S commitment to South-South cooperation remains firm despite a reduction in the allocation for the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) in line with the move to trim government expenditure, says Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Only the ability to finance technical cooperation under the MTCP will be affected, not the commitment and faith in the programme, he told reporters at Wisma Putra in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The Government had allocated RM100 million for the MTCP under the Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996-2000), up from RM67.4 million in the previous plan.

Focusing on areas such as economic planning, privatization, monetary policy and project development, the programme has proven to be a useful vehicle not only in assisting other developing countries, but also in providing an opportunity for Malaysia to learn from the experience of others.

Abdullah said foreign envoys have sought meetings with him to discuss the country's economic situation.

Some of the ambassadors from Islamic countries, who attended the Iftar (breaking of fast) with Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Tuesday, had also sought the Prime Minister's views on the matter.

"They have conveyed their respective governments' views to us and offered their moral support... they expressed the hope that we will recover soon.

"They also said that they value our economic cooperation and are confident that our strong economic fundamentals will see us through," he added.

Abdullah said Malaysian embassy and high commission officials have been tasked with explaining developments in Malaysia, especially those relating to the trade and economy, to their respective host governments.

They have been asked to work hard to help increase foreign direct investment flows to Malaysia.

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