

02 FEB 1998

Wolfensohn-case

MALAYSIA, A CASE STUDY IN EXCELLENT IMPLEMENTATION

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 2 (Bernama) -- The World Bank has described Malaysia as a "case study in excellent implementation" where the bank can learn from and work in the future, particularly in the poverty eradication.

This was based on the World Bank involvement in 99 projects in the country where those projects have been implemented with great harmony and great effectiveness.

"Our experience in Malaysia is really a case study," World Bank President James Wolfensohn told reporters after an hour talk with Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at Carcosa Seri Negara, here tonight.

Wolfensohn, who arrived here today, and Anwar later attended a dinner reception. Also present were Datin Seri Dr Azizah Ismail, Bank Negara Governor Tan Sri Ahmad Mohd Dom and Finance Secretary General Datuk Dr Aris Othman.

Wolfensohn said in the case of Malaysia, it had been a great success story of partnership between the bank and the effective government and "this is an area where we can learn from."

"The Bank will not only be proud to do it but I think we can learn a lot from what the government has done," he said.

On his discussion with Anwar, Wolfensohn said he had "good discussions" and was looking forward to visit Indonesia, the Philippines and South Korea.

"We are looking at two things regionally, one working with some of the governments in the financial area and second, the central focus of the bank, is poverty eradication. So we are talking about working out some programmes," he said, in response to the World Bank's perception of Malaysia's poverty eradication programmes.

He said they also discussed development social safety nets that could be applied in villages and regional areas.

Wolfensohn is here as part of his week-long tour to Southeast Asia, aimed at assessing the impact of Asia's economic crisis and offering support for financial, social and governmental reforms. He has visited Singapore and Thailand.

Wolfensohn is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Prime Minister's Department in the morning. He will give a press conference in the afternoon.

According to the World Bank report, the Bank has given out 99 loans totalling US\$2.8 billion to Malaysia for various projects in agriculture, industry, education, labour and infrastructures. The bank has provided the financial assistance since 1958.

Some 97 loans had been closed. A total of US\$2.6 billion had been paid while the remaining US\$97.5 million is being used for education and health projects, the bank said in a Jan 27 statement issued in Washington and faxed to Bernama today. --BERNAMA

ARA ABG