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Mahathir-Ethiopia

MALAYSIA WILL HELP ETHIOPIA RECONCILE, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight said Malaysia, in the spirit of South-South cooperation, will do its utmost to work together with Ethiopia in efforts towards that country's national reconciliation.

Malaysia watched with interest and admiration the efforts of Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi towards consolidating peace in the country and commended his role in seeking resolution to the problems in southern Sudan and in Somalia, Dr Mahathir said.

"We also know that it is due to your untiring determination that Ethiopia has progressed after two decades of civil strife to become a united and forward-looking nation that it is today," he said at an official dinner in honour of Zenawi at Sri Perdana here.

Zenawi arrived here yesterday for a five-day visit at the invitation of Dr Mahathir.

He is accompanied by Trade and Industry Minister Kasahaun Ayele, senior government officials and a 43-member business delegation.

Malaysia was also impressed with Ethiopia's earnest efforts to rebuild itself and determination to lay the foundation for durable peace both at home and in the Horn of Africa, Dr Mahathir said.

Although both countries had had very little contacts, particularly during the past three decades, Malaysia and Ethiopia had many things in common, he said.

"We are both multi-cultural countries and we believe in power sharing as reflected in the consensus-seeking spirit underlying the concept of our governments," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the success of both countries depended on their ability to promote positive co-operation and co-existence between the people and contend the challenge of bridging the gap between the different segments of their societies.

"The key to fair income distribution is to ensure that everyone gets an equitable share of an enlarged cake, rather than trying to redistribute the crumbs of a shrinking cake more evenly," he said.

Malaysia was also ready to share its experience in the development and management of Ethiopia's agricultural, telecommunication and hydrocarbon sectors, the prime minister said.

Zenawi's visit had certainly laid the basis for mutually beneficial relationship, not only between Ethiopia and Malaysia, but also between Africa, Asean and East Asia, Dr Mahathir said.

In reply, Zenawi said his visit offered vast opportunity for his country to work closely with Malaysia.

It was also timely as Ethiopia was rejuvenating and building up its economy, Zenawi said.

There were still many of areas of business that could be explored between the two countries, he added.

-- BERNAMA

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