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Agong-Uganda

MALAYSIA PRAISES UGANDA'S POLICIES AND REFORMS FOR DEVELOPMENT

KUALA LUMPUR, April 16 (Bernama) -- The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar today lauded Uganda's outward looking policies and reforms which have placed the country on a path of long-term growth and development.

As a result, Tuanku Ja'afar said, Uganda was now reaping the benefits of such policies leading to political and economic stability.

"This is how we also feel about the positive changes taking place elsewhere in Africa and the developing world," he said at a state banquet honouring visiting Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni at Istana Negara here.

Museveni and his wife Janet arrived here yesterday for a four-day visit with a 24-member entourage. The visit, at the invitation of Tuanku Ja'afar, is to strengthen bilateral ties.

Tuanku Ja'afar said Malaysia's relations with Africa was not a recent phenomenon and it had always been based on solidarity and partnership that had begun since before Malaysia's independence.

He said the value of consultation and collective action in pursuit of common objectives also saw Malaysia and countries of Africa co-operate in other areas, ranging from trade, securing fair prices for agricultural products to questions of global peace and security.

Tuanku Ja'afar said Malaysia had promoted greater trade and investment as well as air and sea links with Africa and as a result, trade and investment flows between Malaysia and Africa including Uganda had grown at a fast pace.

"Clearly, Malaysia-Africa co-operation is on a forward momentum," he said, adding that the visit by Museveni was a testimony of the importance to strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries as much as promoting South-South cooperation.

He said Malaysia welcomed more direct exchanges and visits between the two countries, including the private sector, educators, media and other groups.

"Malaysia is convinced that the influence and independence of developing countries are best protected and advanced by knowing each other and working together," he said.

Meanwhile, Museveni, in his speech, said Uganda wished to encourage Malaysia to support the idea of a balanced trade "because there is no way one can talk of free trade when one still has protection in one's economy."

He said Uganda's interest in Malaysia was in the areas of trade, investment, training and tourism.

Uganda, he said, was seeking Malaysian investments in agro-processing, tourism, minerals, freshwater resources, electric power generation and light engineering.

Also present were Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Minister Datuk Leo Moggie as the minister-in-attendance, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Information Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Rahmat.

-- BERNAMA

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