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MAHATHIR OPENS PETRONAS' OFFICE IN SUDAN

KUALA LUMPUR, May 15 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today officially opened Petronas' office in Sudan and launched its operations in that country.

Mahathir, who is on an official visit to Sudan, unveiled a plaque at a ceremony held at a leading hotel in the capital, Khartoum, to mark the occasion.

A statement from Petronas released here said the opening of the Sudan office signified its commitment to further enhance its presence and expand its business activities in Sudan.

Petronas' entry into Sudan forms part of the company's globalisation drive which it has been pursuing since the early 1990s to enhance Malaysia's petroleum reserves, add value to the company's businesses and provide new challenges to its employees, the statement said.

It added that as part of Petronas' commitment to share its experience and expertise with Sudan, the company had in May 1997 signed an agreement with the Sudanese Ministry of Energy and Mining on cooperation and technical assistance.

The agreement covers cooperation on upstream and downstream studies, the development of training programmes and the establishment of a training centre and laboratory facilities for the Sudanese Ministry of Energy and Mining.

Assisting in these undertakings are Petronas' subsidiaries, Petronas Management Training Sdn Bhd and Petronas Research and Scientific Services Sdn Bhd.

Petronas, which is currently actively involved in upstream and downstream activities in 19 countries worldwide, first became involved in Sudan's petroleum industry in 1996.

It was invited to participate in an integrated petroleum exploration and development project in the Muglad Basin.

A consortium known as Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company Ltd (GNPOC) was formed to undertake the project, with Petronas holding a 30 percent interest.

The statement said Petronas' entry into Sudan will give the company the opportunity to have an effective role in the economic development of Sudan, particularly in its oil and gas industry, and contribute to the well-being of the Sudanese people. -- BERNAMA

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