

13/02/1998

Yemen keen to strengthen trade relations

Fadzil Ghazali

YEMEN is interested in forging stronger links with Malaysia, particularly in the areas of trade and investment.

Its visiting Consultative Council chairman Abdulaziz Abdulghani said the various agreements the republic had signed with Malaysia would be good catalysts in rejuvenating such ties.

"Our presence in Malaysia this week is to revive the old relations that Yemen had with Malaysia," he said, adding that his country hopes the agreements signed will provide the base for achieving this.

Abdulghani was speaking at a luncheon in Kuala Lumpur yesterday organised by the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (NCCIM) for visiting Yemen President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Earlier, two agreements and two memorandums of understanding (MOUs) were signed, aimed at promoting business and investment activities between the two countries.

NCCIM signed a cooperation agreement with the Yemen Chamber of Commerce and Industry, while MEC Sales signed a distributorship agreement with Reco Electronics of Yemen.

The MOUs were for cooperation in the areas of fishery and agriculture. One is between Kedah-based Samak Aquaculture and the Yemeni General Investment Authority, while the other is between Samak and the Yemen Fishery Corp.

Prior to this, the West Asian nation had signed three agreements and one MOU with the Malaysian Government, also aimed at further improving bilateral trade and investment.

These pacts are: the investment guarantee agreement, trade agreement, an economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation agreement, while the MOU is between the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (Mida) and Yemen's General Investment Authority.

The agreements were signed last Wednesday after a two-hour bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the visiting Yemeni President.

Abdulghani also said Yemen is embarking on economic reform programmes and the country welcomes the Malaysian private sector's involvement either in the form of direct investments or joint ventures.

"It is hoped that the economic reform programmes will bring an annual growth rate of 8 per cent to Yemen. The reformation brings great investment opportunities in various areas including agriculture and manufacturing," he added.

He said investment laws and policies in Yemen are attractive to foreign investors and that the Malaysian private sector should take advantage of them.

AFP reports: Malaysia's national oil company Petroliam Nasional Bhd (Petronas) is considering oil and gas exploration in Yemen as the country relaxes existing rules, a top business leader said yesterday.

Kalyanasundram Teagarajan, vice-president of the NCCIM, said the issue was raised during talks with Yemen's Planning Minister Abdulkader Bajamal and Industry Minister Ahmad Sofan.

"The Yemeni minister of planning mentioned that the laws were going to be relaxed and revamped to make it easier," Teagarajan said.

Petronas currently has a refinery in Yemen but "we do not have any exploration activities," a company spokesman said.

(END)