

04 FEB 1999

Mahathir-Hun Sen

DR MAHATHIR CONFIDENT OF COOPERATION IN CAMBODIA

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 4 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed confidence that the parties in the Cambodian coalition government will cooperate in the interest of peace and stability and for the welfare of the whole of the Cambodian people.

The Prime Minister said the objective in attaining peace in Cambodia was in line with international efforts which wanted Cambodia to prosper.

"Malaysia recognises the challenges faced by the Cambodian government in striving for national unity and rebuilding the country.

"In supporting these efforts fully, I wish to stress that my government will continue to share its experience and expertise in assisting Cambodia to realise fully the potential of its human resources for the country's economic and social development," he said in his dinner speech in honour of the visiting Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen at Sri Perdana tonight.

The Cambodian leader, who arrived here today at the invitation of Dr Mahathir, is on a three-day official visit to enhance bilateral relations with Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir also took the opportunity to congratulate Hun Sen on his role and commitment in looking for an effective solution for everyone and paving the way for the formation of a new coalition government in Cambodia.

Cambodia held its general election in July last year and formed a coalition government in November, marking the end of a bloody power struggle between Hun Sen and Prince Norodom Ranariddh since July 1997.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was following the Cambodian election closely and had found that the Cambodian people had come out in full support to cast their votes which reflected a strong commitment to the democratic process and their aspiration for a peaceful and stable nation.

He said the agreement reached on the common political and economic platform as well as the principle of power sharing for the country was most meaningful.

The Prime Minister also said the private sectors from the two countries had an important role to play in promoting the economic expansion and development of Malaysia and Cambodia.

"The presence of Malaysian corporate figures and entrepreneurs in Cambodia proved their commitment to work together in a productive partnership with their business colleagues in Cambodia for mutual benefits," he said.

He said the participation of the Malaysian private sector in rebuilding and developing Cambodia would continue to be encouraged.

"We will ensure that they adhere to Cambodia's laws, regulations and policies. We are certain that Cambodia will also cooperate with the Malaysian companies in line with the Cambodian laws to enhance their involvement in the economic development of Cambodia," he added.

Currently, there are 70 Malaysian companies investing in Cambodia and 30 of them are in the form of joint-ventures with Cambodian parties.

On Cambodia's entry as the 10th Asean member, the Prime Minister said Cambodia's membership was a positive development in the objective towards expanding Asean with full membership from all countries in Southeast Asia.

"Malaysia is confident that Cambodia can contribute and play a meaningful role in improving and developing the organisation in the interest of regional peace, security and prosperity," he said.

He said it was Malaysia's intention to see the Asean spirit of goodwill, mutual trust and cooperation continue to mould the thinking of Asean in the future.

-- BERNAMA

HS AHH AO