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LID-SUDAN

SUDAN OFFERS RAIL PROJECT TO MALAYSIA

LANGKAWI, July 26 (Bernama) -- Putting the smart partnership at work at the ongoing fourth Langkawi International Dialogue (LID) here, Sudan and Malaysia today engaged in the first phase of negotiations for a railway project in the African state.

Sudan Foreign Minister Ali Nimeri said the project would be undertaken on a joint venture basis by the private sector of the two countries.

Speaking to reporters after accompanying Sudanese President Lt Gen Omar Hassan Ahmad to a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the fringes of the LID here today, Ali said Sudan's Finance and Transport ministers would be meeting with their Malaysian counterparts to iron out the details of the project.

The minister said Omar who is participating in the LID, discussed the matter with Dr Mahathir, making it the first step towards negotiations.

He, however, could not disclose the cost of the project and the length of the railway lines.

"Sudan is a vast country. If you take the pipeline now which we have built, it is 1,600 km, the longest in Africa," he said.

Sudan is the largest country in the African continent, spanning some two million km.

Ali said Sudan was also looking at joint ventures with Malaysia in many areas including air links and communications.

He said several Malaysian firms, including oil giant Petronas, have invested in Sudan "and we are looking for more investments."

On Sudan-Malaysia ties, Ali said it was improving and suggested that the two countries increase exploration in other areas, particularly trade and investment. -- BERNAMA

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