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Malaysia-Botswana

TAP BUSINESS PROSPECTS IN BOTSWANA, PRIVATE SECTOR TOLD

KUALA LUMPUR, June 29 (Bernama) -- Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Dr Leo Michael Toyad today called on the Malaysian private sector to seek trade and investment opportunities in the southern African state of Botswana.

By doing so, the Malaysian business community could also tap the growth potential of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), a regional grouping in which Botswana is a member, he said.

Botswana could also serve as a centre for Malaysian companies to launch economic activities in its neighbouring countries, he said at the opening of the Botswana Consulate, here.

Malaysia's well-known corporate figure Datuk Dr Mohan Swami has been appointed the republic's honorary consul.

Land-locked Botswana, neighbouring Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, has a 1.6 million population. It gained Independence from Britain on Sept 30, 1966.

On a wider perspective, Toyad said, the spirit of South-South Cooperation remained an important basis for Malaysia-Botswana relations.

The long distance between the two countries was no hindrance to forging closer cooperation, he said.

Toyad said greater people-to-people interaction must be encouraged between the two countries especially among artistes, academicians, students and businessmen.

Speaking at the function, Botswana High Commissioner to Malaysia A.M. Dube said opening of the consulate was an important milestone in relations between Kuala Lumpur and Gaborone and a first step towards an eventual resident mission in Malaysia when conditions permit.

Describing the two-way relations as strong, he said, there were good indications of sustainable economic benefits for both sides in the long run.

"In this respect, I must pay special tribute to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and our former President Sir Ketumile Masire whose personal friendship and their strong commitment to South-South Cooperation were instrumental in forging the strong bond of friendship and cooperation between our people," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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