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France all set to encourage more investment

PUTRAJAYA, Mon. - France is encouraging greater investment in Malaysia in view of the fast pace of economic recovery here.

Its visiting Minister of State for Foreign Trade, Francois Huwart, said today that his country was confident about the Malaysian economy. He hoped for better co-operation between both countries.

Huwart, who arrived here last night, was speaking to reporters after a 45-minute meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad here. He is leading a 20-member delegation on a one-day visit. Also present at the meeting were the president of the French-Malaysian parliamentary group, Didier Boulaud, French ambassador to Malaysia Xavier Driencourt and Undersecretary (Europe and Central Asia) of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, Datuk Dennis Ignatius.

Describing Paris-Kuala Lumpur ties as excellent, Huwart said bilateral ties between the two countries also extended to other areas.

He said France had many world-class companies with vast experience in the areas of environment, energy and automotive and their participation in Malaysia would enhance the current cooperation.

Among areas that Huwart believed France could contribute were in water and space technology sectors.

Earlier this morning, Huwart gave a special address entitled French and European Conception of the Future of Multilateral Trade Negotiations at Nikko Hotel. The talk was chaired by ISIS chairman Tan Sri Dr Noordin Sopiee.

He touched on the globalisation process and the role of the WTO in light of growing concerns that surround the trade model.

During the question and answer session that followed, members of the floor, including former Home Minister Tan Sri Mohd Ghazalie Shafie, asked him about issues involving areas such as Government intervention and the Internet in relation to the world economy.

In the afternoon, Huwart and his delegation visited the Malaysia-France Institute in Bangi where he officiated MFI's Industrial Service Centre and Vivendi Water Academy. Also present at the ceremony was Sepang MP Seripah Noli Syed Hussin and MFI managing director Ghazali Manaf.

MFI was established in 1995 to run specialised industrial technology courses. The institute is a joint-venture between MARA and the french.

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