

16/11/2001

Equatorial Guinea hopes to emulate Malaysia's success

PUTRAJAYA, Thurs. - Equatorial Guinea, located in the west of central Africa, wants to emulate Malaysia's success in wealth distribution and improving vital sectors of its economy.

The former Spanish colony has sought Malaysia's technical expertise to develop its agricultural and primary industry sectors.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has pledged Malaysia's readiness to offer relevant expertise and experience to expedite the progress of the once poverty-stricken country.

Said Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar of the meeting between Dr Mahathir and Equatorial Guinea's President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo: "The country is impressed with the way Malaysia is run and the way its natural resources are being tapped.

"It wants to learn from Malaysia as both countries have similarities in terms of climate and landscape.

"In particular, Equatorial Guinea welcomes investment in the poultry and pig rearing industries as well as showing keen interest in the advancement of Malaysia's palm oil research."

Syed Hamid was speaking at a Press briefing after the signing of an Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Co-operation (ESTCC) agreement between Malaysia and Equatorial Guinea.

The agreement, signed by Syed Hamid and Equatorial Guinea's Foreign Affairs, International Co-operation and Francophone Minister Santiago Nsobeya Efuman, was witnessed by Dr Mahathir and Mbasogo.

Dr Mahathir and Mbasogo had met in a closed-door meeting for about 45 minutes before proceeding to a delegation meeting, which lasted an hour. Also present at the meeting were International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad.

Bilateral trade between Malaysia and Equatorial Guinea is currently one-sided in favour of Malaysia with RM2.23 million last year. Malaysian companies are engaged in the fields of oil and gas exploration (Petronas), timber and road construction in Equatorial Guinea.

Syed Hamid said Mbasogo had also expressed interest in using the ESTCC agreement as a platform to set up a capital city similar to Putrajaya in Equatorial Guinea.

"Towards this end, Dr Mahathir invited the country to send its officers here to undergo short courses under the Malaysian Technological Co-operation programme," he said.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir made a courtesy call on Mbasogo at the Regent Hotel in Kuala Lumpur where the President is staying.

Mbasogo, who leads a 30-member delegation, arrived in the Federal capital this morning for a two-day State visit.

He was given a State welcome at the Parliament House by Deputy Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin.

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