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8MP-COOPERATION

M'SIA TO STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION UNDER 8MP

KUALA LUMPUR, April 23 (Bernama) -- Under the Eighth Malaysia Plan (8MP), Malaysia will continue to cooperate with the international community, development partners and other South countries to address development issues at the national, regional and global levels.

"For the 8MP period, international cooperation will continue to focus on capacity-building and human resource development, particularly in the field of Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

"In addition, other regional self-help mechanisms and efforts to ensure the international financial architecture will be pursued to ensure the stability of the international financial system," said the report.

The 8MP (2001-2005) was unveiled by the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Parliament today.

At the bilateral level, the report said Malaysia's policy of development through the establishment and strengthening of bilateral relations with both the developed as well as developing nations would be intensified.

In the next five years, Malaysia aims to establish more diplomatic missions including those in the Czech Republic and Ireland.

The Joint Commission mechanism would also be strengthened to improve bilateral relations, broaden science and technology cooperation as well as increase trade and investment.

"In this respect, an increasing number of bilateral payment agreements, investment guarantee agreements and palm oil credit payment arrangements as well as trade and investment cooperation agreements will be signed between Malaysia and cooperating countries," said the report.

On regional level, the country would continue to cooperate towards enhancing the pace of economic integration in Asean and promote trade and investment.

"Intensification of the Hanoi Plan of Action and cooperation with Asean will be continued to strengthen economic fundamentals and ensure sustainable economic growth.

"In addition, the proposal to restructure the Asean Plus Three forum as the Esat Asia Cooperation Group will be studied," said the report.

Sub-regional development, through the growth triangles, would be pursued to accelerate growth in the region with development in priority areas expedited to optimise the abundant natural resources.

Malaysia would also continue to cooperate with APEC and ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) towards achieving economic stability and promoting trade and investment and gaining market accessibility.

The report said the country would actively participate in the programmes organised by multilateral organisation like the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) and the World Trade Organisation.

In this regard, Malaysia would cooperate with developing countries to reach a common position, particularly on the need for tangible benefits to developing countries from trade liberalisation and to address the resultant growing inequalities of wealth and opportunities arising from globalisation.

The report also said efforts would continue to be made towards the restructuring of the international financial architecture and to democratise the global decision-making process.

To further strengthen Islamic solidarity, the country would cooperate with OIC members to increase the influence and promote the activities and programmes of the organisation including Islamic finance and banking.

Cooperation between the developing countries would also be intensified during the plan period where the South-South cooperation has been identified as an effective mechanism for optimising the potential of developing countries.

"The prevailing technological gap between the North and South necessitates the grouping of South countries, as a single voice, to advocate major transformations of the international economic system," said the report. -- BERNAMA

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