

09 AUG 2002
ANIFAH-COLUMBIA
COLUMBIA KEEN ON MALAYSIA'S PALM OIL TECHNOLOGY

SANDAKAN, Aug 9 (Bernama) -- Columbia is keen on using Malaysia's technological expertise for the development of large-scale oil palm plantations in its country, said Deputy Minister of Primary Industries, Datuk Anifah Aman here today.

He said the Latin American country at the same time was also offering investment opportunities for Malaysian companies to explore new markets for palm oil in their country.

"They praised Malaysia's success as the world's largest producer of palm oil and have called on investors from here to invest in their country," he told reporters here today after presenting a cheque worth RM4.7 million to 20 smallholders involved in the Replanting Incentive Scheme from various parts of Sabah.

Anifah who recently visited Columbia said Malaysia was most receptive to the offer, saying that it offered various possibilities including increasing Malaysia's palm oil market in the country.

"The government is studying the matter as the country has a lot to offer."

As a palm oil producer with a liberal attitude towards competition in the industry, he said Malaysia was not denying the possibility that Columbia could one day become a competitor.

Meanwhile, he said Malaysia was increasing its efforts to market palm oil in Indonesia which has received good response.

"Investment opportunity in the area is being looked into including the large-scale planting of oil palm by entrepreneurs from Malaysia especially with the cheap and vast labour there," he said.

On another note, Anifah said that the ministry welcomed the government's announcement to continue to take legal workers from Indonesia as achieved during the meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri in Bali yesterday.

"The decision from the discussion is a welcome relief, especially for the construction and plantation sector which could be jeopardised without sufficient labour," he said.

Meanwhile in his speech, he said that a total of 196,805 hectares in the country had been registered for financial aid programmes through the SITS which was launched in January last year.

From the total, 65,259 hectares belonged to the government sector and 28,742 to smallholders and the remaining to private sector. -- BERNAMA

CFM JS JR SD