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Helping to share our experience

Deborah Loh

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The United Nations Development Programme can complement South-South co-operation programmes initiated by Malaysia, UNDP resident co-ordinator for operations here Maxine Olson said.

Olson, who earlier today presented her credentials to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Putrajaya, said UNDP offices in Africa could benefit from Malaysia's experience in development.

"Malaysia is seen as a very positive example for African countries. UNDP, with offices both here and there, is in a good position to facilitate South-South co-operation," she told the New Straits Times in an interview.

"It is difficult for project officers coming here from another country to translate what they see here into reality in their own countries.

"Such development requires sustained contact and that's where UNDP can help. We can reinforce the programmes Malaysia has already started."

Olson said she discussed South-South co-operation with Dr Mahathir today. "He is a tremendous proponent of it," she said.

Malaysia has already initiated such co-operation, including the Langkawi International Dialogue.

Olson is UNDP resident representative for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. She was appointed to the post about six months ago.

UNDP works with Governments worldwide on various areas including health, information communication technology and environment.

Olson said the UNDP would focus on information and communication technology, environment and HIV/AIDS issues here.

On ICT, she said the UNDP would study how it could improve the quality of life and expand ICT's reach to rural areas.

Discussions with the National Information Technology Council had started, and Olson said she was keen to learn more about the Multimedia Super Corridor to see if the UNDP could help.

On the environment, Olson said the issues included biodiversity and renewable energy from oil palm waste.

UNDP was also working on raising awareness about HIV/AIDS and outreach to AIDS victims.

Olson said that in development, people should always come first.  
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