

20 AUG 2002

Ukraine-Embassy

MALAYSIA AND UKRAINE LOOK FORWARD TO STRONGER TIES

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 20 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Ukraine are looking forward to forging stronger bilateral ties and cooperation in the future.

Ukraine, which officially opened its embassy here today, is hoping that Malaysia would set up its diplomatic mission in Kiev, Ukraine, by next year.

Ukraine's First Vice-Prime Minister Oleg Dubyna said the opening of the embassy here had become a reality because of the hard work of Ukrainian diplomats and the government.

"We hope Malaysia will open their embassy in Ukraine by year 2003," he told a press conference after the inauguration of Ukraine's Embassy at 22nd floor, Menara Tan and Tan, Jalan Tun Razak.

Speaking through an interpreter, Dubyna said he hoped Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would make an official visit to Ukraine next year.

"My visit this time is too short, but we have had a few important meetings and events, including discussions with Dr Mahathir, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar," he said.

He said both parties had reached understanding, especially on political matters, achieved positive results on a wide range of cooperation.

"We have fixed a clear direction in our relationship, like cooperation in science and technology, for example," he said.

Dubyna said Ukraine hoped that Malaysia would be its bridge to this region and likewise Ukraine would be Malaysia's bridge to Europe.

"I want to emphasise that Ukraine constantly tries to widen the relationship with countries all over the world. Malaysia and Ukraine have already had bilateral relationship since some 10 years ago and the future between both countries is very bright," said Dubyna, who described Malaysia as a leading country of South East Asia.

Dubyna, who arrived yesterday for a three-day visit on Abdullah's invitation, is leading a 20-member delegation which includes senior government officials and eight directors of Ukraine's state enterprises.

Ukraine, a maritime nation of 50 million people in eastern Europe, shares borders with Belarus, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia and Slovakia.

It is noted for its expertise in science and technology, aircraft building and satellite and space telecommunications.

Meanwhile, Syed Hamid told Bernama that the opening of the Malaysian Embassy in Kiev would be undertaken in next year's planning.

"We will look positively in order to reciprocate their request," he said.

He said that at the moment Malaysian diplomatic interests in Ukraine were handled by the Malaysian Embassy in Poland.

He said the Malaysian ambassador to Poland would study the possibility of establishing an embassy in Kiev.

Syed Hamid said the diplomatic relationship between Malaysia and Ukraine was good, and the two countries had on many occasions cooperated at the international level.

On other efforts to strengthen bilateral ties, he said Malaysia would send the draft agreement on establishing a joint Malaysia-Ukraine Commission to Ukraine for the European nation to identify the areas of

cooperation that both countries could focus on.

The minister said Ukraine was not only interested in cooperation in defence, but also in other areas where it was strong such as in shipbuilding, aerospace engineering and biotechnology.

-- BERNAMA

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