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Senegal-Development

SENEGAL KEEN TO TAP MALAYSIA'S EXPERTISE IN MANY AREAS

PUTRAJAYA, Sept 12 (Bernama) -- Senegal is seeking Malaysia's cooperation and support in the development of its proposed new administrative capital and an airport.

Dakar also wants Kuala Lumpur to increase imports from the western African country which is now mainly confined to one of its major agricultural products -- cotton.

These are some of the matters discussed during a restricted meeting between visiting Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade and Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the subsequent 30-minute delegation meeting headed by both leaders at the Prime Minister's Office here, today.

Briefing reporters after the meetings, Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Dr Leo Michael Toyad said that Malaysia was willing to offer its expertise to help Senegal construct the administrative capital.

"They have designers and architects but would like to consult their Malaysian counterparts so as to avoid making any mistakes. They have been hearing about the successful Putrajaya project and they would like us to cooperate in terms of giving them advice and in many other areas," he said.

Turning to trade matters, Dr Toyad said that Malaysia would look for new items to import from Senegal in view of increasing the trade volume between the two countries which was in Malaysia's favour.

Total bilateral trade stood at RM9.51 million last year while the figure for 2000 was RM6.74 million.

He said that some Malaysian companies were looking at Senegal's garment and textile industry.

In addition, he said, Senegal was looking for partners to help develop its tyre production and agriculture sectors.

Dr Toyad said that there was also an agreement involving Malaysia's Port Klang and the Port Authority of Dakar to further promote the growth of the Dakar port.

He said that Dr Mahathir explained at length about how Malaysia went about transforming itself from a commodity-driven country to become an industrialised nation.

As a sign of Senegal's intention to forge closer ties with Malaysia, Dr Toyad said that it opened an embassy here last July. Malaysia opened its mission in Senegal in 1992.

On another matter, Dr Toyad said that the prime minister formally invited President Abdoulaye to attend the Summits of Non-Aligned Movement in February and the Organisation of Islamic Conference in October next year, both of which will be hosted by Malaysia.

Senegal is bounded on the north by Mauritania, on the east by Mali, on the south by Guinea and Guinea-Bissau, and on the west by the Atlantic Ocean.

It has an estimated 10.6 million population, 53 per cent of whom live in rural areas.

The president ends his three-day visit to Malaysia tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA

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