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Nauru hopes to establish closer trade ties with Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - With the appointment of businessman Datuk Lim Tong Yong as the honorary consul-general for Nauru, the small island republic located near Fiji hopes to establish better diplomatic ties with Malaysia.

Nauru President Rene R. Harris said his country was confident with dealing with Malaysia particularly with the latter's dynamic leadership under Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and its sound economic status.

Harris is also optimistic that Lim would do a good job in promoting business ventures and other related opportunities for both the Malaysians and Nauruians.

With the setting up of the consulate in Malaysia, the 51-year-old businessman will also oversee the Southeast Asian region where Malaysia will act as the trade office for business opportunities.

Harris said Nauru imports almost everything including water and foodstuff from Australia and therefore it is about time to diversify the sources of supply to Asia through the Malaysian consulate.

The Nauru Government at present invests in hotels and real estate in Australia, New Zealand and the United States and they intend to diversify their investments into Asia.

Nauru is rich in phosphates and so exports fertilisers to other countries.

"That (phosphates) is our main revenue," said Harris after signing an agreement to set up a consulate at the Sheraton Subang Hotel and Towers in Subang Jaya, Selangor, recently.

Apart from phosphates, the island is also rich in tuna and salmon and deep sea fishing is popular there.

Harris said the Government hopes to diversify their foreign investments and their main target is China (North Asia) and Malaysia (South-east Asia).

"We'd also like to bring more tourists from the Southeast Asian region and vice versa," said Harris.