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ABDULLAH-CAMBODIA

BILATERAL TRADE TIES CAN IMPROVE

KUALA LUMPUR, May 19 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Cambodia must explore more conducive mechanisms of doing businesses to enhance the comparatively small volume of trade between them, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, said today.

Speaking at the official dinner in honour of visiting Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister, Sar Kheng at Putrajaya, he said that the move would also help to amicably resolve some of the anxieties among Malaysian businessmen trading and investing in the Indo-Chinese nation.

The Cambodian Deputy Premier is on a three-day visit to Malaysia.

Abdullah said that while two-way trade amounted to only RM283.7 million in 2002, Cambodia remains an important trading partner to Malaysia.

He said that trade could be significantly increased over the next few years while Malaysia remains among the biggest investors in Cambodia with more than 40 Malaysian companies now operating in Cambodia in property development, forestry and banking.

Against such a backdrop, "it is imperative for our two governments to provide the necessary environment to enable our private sectors to further continue to tap the business potential of our two countries," he said.

He said that the cordial relations between the two countries were already capped by the State Visit of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to Phnom Penh in December last year and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's attendance at the 8th ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh in November 2002.

Abdullah said that Malaysia has been extending technical assistance under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) to Cambodia, whereby to-date, a total of 296 Cambodian officials have attended short and long term courses in various fields of study.

The deputy prime minister also lauded the Royal Cambodian government's long-term vision to create "a socially cohesive, educationally advanced, and culturally vibrant Cambodia without poverty, illiteracy and diseases, which will allow each person to be the best that it is in them to be."

With global peace and security being challenged by the rising threat of terrorism and the tendency to act beyond the framework of multilateralism, he said that the international community should increase its functional cooperation and act collectively to address these problems as these are detrimental to economic development.

On its part, he said that the Malaysian Government has since established the South East Asia Regional Centre for Counter Terrorism with the objective to organise training courses, seminars, workshops and activities related to counter terrorism as well as to train and upgrade capabilities of participants, both from within the country and from outside the country in various fields related to counter terrorism.

He said that Malaysia has invited ASEAN countries and Cambodian officials in particular to avail the courses offered by the Centre as well as courses by MTCP so as to share experiences in the fight against transnational organised crime.

-- BERNAMA

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