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Book highlights special ties between Malaysia and Africa

A BOOK, *Malaysia-Africa Relations, Searching for Common Goals*, which highlights the special relationship between Africa and Malaysia was jointly launched by King Mswati III of Swaziland and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Smart Partnership dinner on Friday.

Written by Dr Hamidin Abdul Hamid, a Malaysian historian who teaches African Studies at Universiti Malaya, the book touches on the vital role Dr Mahathir has played in developing a close bond with African countries.

The book points to the formation of G-15 and Malaysia's strong involvement in the South-South Co-operation as a testimony of Malaysia's relationship with Africa.

It says that the last decade witnessed an increase in Malaysia's trade and investment with Africa.

"Events such as the Langkawi International Dialogue have brought the two nations together," said Hamidin in the book.

Using a historical perspective, the book argues that the Malaysia-Africa relationship started long before the arrival of Europeans.

The nature of the relation between Malaysia and Africa changed accordingly with changes in the world caused by the emergence of the West in the 15th century.

The book also argues that the relation between Malaysia and Africa must also be understood through the bigger picture of relations among developing countries and Malaysia-Africa memberships in other international institutions and organisations.

"The United Nations, for example, was used by Malaysia to fight on behalf of the Africans against Apartheid while at the same time pursuing the interests of the developing countries in the areas of international economy and trade."