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PM: Aim for top quality in our goods

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DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia should emulate Sweden by producing high quality goods for export to be competitive in international trade. It could be done by applying research commercially, the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir, speaking at a Press conference at the end of his official visit to Sweden, said Malaysia had much to learn but was confident that the desired result could be achieved if everyone involved paid attention to the details.

He said Malaysia and Sweden shared similar views in many areas. "In fact, Sweden, with a population of about eight million, is proof that a small nation can be a big player in world trade and contribute meaningfully as well.

"We are also like-minded in international relations. I am happy with my visit. I hope Malaysians can learn from Sweden especially in the field of medical research and other high technology industries. I hope Swedish investors can pay more attention to Malaysia and diversify their interests," Dr Mahathir said.

The Prime Minister arrived here on Monday after addressing the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London.

He was accompanied by his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali. Also in the entourage were Datuk Seri Najib Razak, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Datuk Seri Law Hieng Dieng, Datuk Siti Zaharah, Datuk Amar Leo Moggie and Datuk Seri Mohd Nazri Aziz.

After the Press conference Dr Mahathir left for New York to address the United Nations General Assembly.

Dr Mahathir said: "We have no problem with Sweden. We share similar world views. It is a small country, but has a very high standard of living. It exports high quality products, which have made it very competitive. This is its philosophy - it may be a small country but it can compete effectively because it produces quality products.

"This is what we want, too. We must achieve world quality in the products we manufacture. Sweden pays a lot of attention to research and this is seen in the close collaboration between the Government and the private sector. I hope we can collaborate with Swedish research institutes," he added.

Asked what areas of collaboration there could be between the two countries, Dr Mahathir identified electronics, power generation, and research and development in high-tech industries as potential areas.

Asked when Malaysia would proceed with the 3G telephony system, Dr Mahathir, who yesterday visited the Ericsson plant here, said that would depend on several factors.

"The 3G system is very sophisticated and requires more preparation before its introduction in Malaysia," he said.

Dr Mahathir met his Swedish counterpart Goran Persson yesterday, and the two were joined by several others for full bilateral talks aimed at improving economic and social political ties. Several chief executive officers also met him privately to discuss economic co-operation.