

Malaysia to help Sudan with more investments

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MALAYSIA has pledged more investments in Sudan and promised to use its position as chairman of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to support the peace process here.

"We will support whatever moves necessary to bring about peace," said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"Peace will attract more interest from Malaysian businesses. It is ultimately economic development that will assist the people," he told reporters yesterday, the second day of a three-day official visit here.

"Sudan is looking east (for development role models), and Malaysia is one of the countries it is looking to."



The Malaysian delegation here includes Petronas president and chief executive officer Tan Sri Mohd Hassan Marican. Petronas has invested RM5 billion in Sudan, making Malaysia the second largest investor in the country after China. Accompanying Abdullah are Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry Ng Lip Yong. Nadicorp Holdings Bhd execu-

tive chairman Datuk Nadzmi Salleh is leading the Malaysian business delegation, which includes companies such as Peremba Bhd and Puncak Niaga Holdings Bhd.

Yesterday, Abdullah met Sudanese President Omer Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir, whose National Congress party two years ago signed a peace deal with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the party of Sudan's First Vice-President Salva Kiir, ending a civil war that lasted 21 years.

After the meeting, Omer said he hoped the OIC would support Sudan against "movements that are resisting the peace process".

He also told reporters he hoped

it would help Sudan "confront Western pressure to accept international forces in Darfur".

It was reported by the official Saudi news agency SPA on Sunday that Sudan had signed a joint agreement with the United Nations and the African Union defining their roles in the conflict in Darfur.

The introduction of UN peacekeepers into Darfur was discussed at last month's Arab League summit in Riyadh, between Omer, Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa.

Omer has maintained that deployment of UN troops would violate Sudan's sovereignty.