

**Malaysia, Britain See Stronger Bilateral Ties Ahead, Says Envoy  
Bernama  
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By Siti Radziah Hamzah**

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 25 (Bernama) -- Bilateral trade between Malaysia and Britain is expected to exceed RM40 billion by 2016, with the set up of a special working group between British High Commission and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry.

British High Commissioner to Malaysia, Simon Featherstone said the cooperation would identify and tackle trade barriers as well as some other issues to help boost bilateral trade.

"We try to identify the areas with a lot of potential to grow. For example, in services, we would like our legal services and retail services to be able to operate a little bit freer here than what has been allowed up until now," he told Bernama.

The special working group was established after the visit of British Prime Minister David Cameron to Malaysia in April last year.

Featherstone said bilateral trade between Malaysia and the UK had registered a healthy growth despite the economic uncertainties in the Eurozone.

He said the total bilateral trade for goods and services hit an impressive RM21.4 billion in 2011 and expected the trade figure to be higher in 2012.

"We have a history of very close relationship in education, that is our strongest area as well as the large number of students of about 13,000 to 14,000 Malaysian students in the UK," said Featherstone.

He noted that a lot of businesses in the UK see Malaysia as the launchpad to the Asean region.

"We have those (British) companies which are just about to launch new joint ventures or business in Malaysia in sectors including oil and gas, retail, healthcare, building and civil engineering," he added.

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