

**Malaysia, Sri Lanka to Explore New Ideas of Cooperation**  
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PUTRAJAYA, Dec 16 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Sri Lanka have reaffirmed determination to take bilateral relations between the two countries to a higher level by exploring new areas of cooperation.

According to a joint statement issued today in conjunction with the official visit of Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena to Malaysia, the new areas of cooperation include those in the political, trade and investment, education, tourism, human resource, training and cultural relations as well as people-to-people contact.

"Both leaders recognised the need to engage at the highest level towards further enhancement of bilateral relations between the two countries.

"The two sides agreed that every effort will be made to encourage and promote exchanges between government officials and leaders of private sector with a view to further expand the relations at official and private sector levels," the statement said.

The joint statement added that Malaysia and Sri Lanka reaffirmed their desire to promote greater opportunities for students to pursue their higher studies in each other's country.

The two leaders also acknowledged the increasing two-way tourist movement and recalled the close cultural affinity of the peoples of the two countries, including the presence of a large Sri Lankan community in Malaysia, it said.

The joint statement said both leaders were unanimous in their rejection of violent extremism and, in expressing their strong condemnation of terrorism in all forms and manifestation, called upon all states to reject terrorism and bring the perpetrators of terrorism to justice.

"Both sides agreed to continue sharing information and best practices with a view to address the challenges posed by terrorism and other traditional and non-traditional threats," the statement added.

Najib and Sirisena also witnessed the signing of five memoranda of understanding (MoUs).

The MoUs are cooperations in the field of tourism related activities; youth development; culture, arts and heritage; MoU on recruitment, employment and repatriation of workers; and MoU between the Sri Lanka Council for Agricultural Research Policy (SLCARP) and Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) on scientific research and technical cooperation.

The joint statement said Malaysia and Sri Lanka recognised each other's responsibility in the promotion of peace, development and security of the region and beyond based on a convergence of political and socio-economic interest and aspirations.

It added that Malaysia and Sri Lanka underscored the need to adhere to the main objectives and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and norms of International Law based on trust, equality and cooperation.

"The two leaders emphasised the need for concerted efforts to build confidence and mutual understanding and strengthen stability regionally and internationally.

"The two leaders agreed that international issues should be resolved through peaceful dialogue and diplomatic means," the joint statement further said.

The statement added that Malaysia would continue to promote the moderation agenda and mediation approach, promote the enhancement of United Nations peacekeeping operations, support peace building in countries emerging from conflicts and encourage continued discussion on the comprehensive reform of the United Nations Security Council.

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