

Malaysia's Mahathir to share development tips with Africa

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From Muin Abdul Majid

DAKAR, Jan 15 (Bernama) – African nations can expect to get a wealth of tips and guidance on progress and development from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad as they converge on this Senegalese capital for the 3rd International Conference on the Emergence of Africa (ICEA-III).

The Malaysian prime minister, who is scheduled to arrive here on Wednesday, will join Senegal's President Macky Sall and other regional leaders for the Jan 17-19 forum focusing on the central theme of 'Emergence, Private Sector and Inclusiveness'.

"What they want to hear from him is Malaysia's own experience in development. This is a leader who brought Malaysia to the international arena and made Malaysia an emerging country," Malaysian ambassador to Senegal, Dr Shazelina Zainul Abidin said Tuesday.

Briefing Malaysian media on Dr Mahathir's Jan 16-17 presence in Senegal for the forum, she noted that this year's ICEA would also touch on the importance of so-called 'national champions' in efforts to become an emerging country.

"And we have a number of them such as Petronas and AirAsia. So they want to hear from Tun how he did it, what lessons can they learn from our emergence, and what role did the national champions play in ensuring that Malaysia became an emerging country," she explained.

According to Ambassador Shazelina, who has been posted to this Western African nation of over 15 million people for the past one year, Dr Mahathir would be the only head of government from outside Africa to be attending the conference.

She said when Senegal knew that Dr Mahathir was coming for ICEA-III, its officials extended all assistance to the embassy to make it happen.

“Senegal is happy to have him here. He is a much respected figure in Africa,” she said, adding that Dr Mahathir was scheduled to hold talks with President Sall at the Presidential Palace soon after his arrival in Dakar.

This will be Dr Mahathir’s first visit to Senegal in 27 years, having last made his way here back in 1992 for a G15 gathering.

All eyes will surely be on the 93-year-old Malaysian prime minister as he takes part in a number of panel discussions at ICEA-III.

Dr Mahathir will be accompanied on the visit by his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Marzuki Yahya as well as senior government officials from the Prime Minister's Office and Foreign Ministry.

The ICEA was established to support the dynamics of African economies following the recovery of the global economy after the shock of 2016.

The first two editions of the ICEA, held in 2015 and 2017 in Abidjan, showed that several African countries were aiming to move towards emergence, formulating emergence plans supported by long-term visions.

ICEA-III’s objective will be to deepen the debate on the robustness of growth and inclusivity in Africa’s emergence plans, in particular, a better positioning of of the private sector supported by strong partnerships with the State to promote strong, resilient and inclusive growth that values the potential of all territories.

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