

Mahathir, first Malaysian PM to share views on combating graft at IAACA, IACA

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VIENNA, Jan 19 (Bernama) – Tun Dr Mahatrhir Mohamad would be the first Malaysian Prime Minister to share ways with international community and Malaysia's efforts in curbing graft during his working visit to Austria particularly attending the 10th General Conference and Annual Meeting of the International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities (IAACA) this Tuesday.

The prime minister would be delivering a keynote address at the conference with the theme "15 years of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, Accomplishments and Prospects'.

Dr Mahathir is also scheduled to deliver a lecture, themed "Fighting Corruption in Malaysia : Achievements, Challenges and Perspectives, organised by the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) here.

Malaysian Ambbassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Datuk Ganeson Sivagurunathan said the conference gathers political leaders, including heads of government and anti corruption agencies as well as practitioners of world wide region to exchange views on promoting measures to prevent and combat corruption, supporting international cooperation and technical assistance as well as promoting integrity, accountability and proper management of public affairs.

Ganeson said the keynote address marks the first appearance of Tun Dr Mahathir at the Vienna International Conference (VIC) while his last visit to Vienna was in 1985.

“In this regard, the IAACA serves as an ideal platform for the prime minister to highlight the

efforts and commitment of the Malaysian Government in the fight against corruption with a view to portray a positive image of Malaysia as a country which strongly upholds the rule of law, integrity and accountability," he said.

The IAACA is a non-governmental organisation established with the aim to promote the effective implementation of the UN Convention Against Corruption and to assist anti-corruption authorities in the global fight against corruption.

In May 2016, Qatar's Attorney General Dr Ali Fetais Al Marri became the president of the IAACA.

Ganeson said on Jan 21, Dr Mahathir, in his first ever visit to Austria since Pakatan Harapan took over the government on May 9 2018, would be having bilateral meetings with his Austrian counterpart, Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, the world's youngest leader at 32, and Austria's President Alexander Van der Bellen.

During the meeting, the leaders are expected to exchange views on strengthening bilateral relations between Malaysia and Austria particularly in the areas of trade and investment, education, science and technology and tourism, as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest.

"The Austrian president is looking forward to meet Tun (Dr Mahathir) and very keen to learn from Malaysia regarding our relationship with China.

"From the feedback, European Ambassadors were astonished with the transition of government from the previous government in Malaysia and noted that our country is a model of developing countries. A lot of countries look up to us and are keen to learn from us. This is very positive for Malaysia," Ganeson said.

Ganeson said on the sideline of the working visit, Dr Mahathir will have a meeting with the Austrian Business Community to highlight the potential trade and investment opportunities

in Malaysia.

According to Ganeson who had been posted to Austria since February 2018, the existing cooperation between Malaysia and Austria is manifested in the fields of trade and investment, education, tourism but have yet to reach its full potential.

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.

Within the European Union, Austria was ranked Malaysia's 10th largest trading partner, 17th largest export destination and 8th largest export source.

The total bilateral trade between Malaysia and Austria for the Jan-Nov 2018 period stood at RM3.09 billion, an increase of 22 percent from RM2.53 billion in the corresponding period of 2017.

Malaysia's export in 2018 amounted to RM0.47 billion, while import amounted to RM2.62 billion and the total trade has always been in favor of Austrian.

As of June 2018, a total of 17 manufacturing projects with Austrian participation was implemented with an investment value of RM53.6 million and generated a total of 2,747 employment opportunities.

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