

Zim Takes Leaf from Malaysia: President

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ZIMBABWE has taken a leaf from the Malaysian economic success story as the country works tirelessly towards turning around the economy in light of challenges being faced, President Mugabe has said. Speaking at a dinner hosted in honour of visiting former Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah DT Hj Mohd Ali at State House on Tuesday night, Cde Mugabe said Dr Mahathir was the founder and architect of modern Malaysia.

"As we tirelessly work towards turning around our economy in the light of the challenges we face, we have taken a leaf from your noble ideas that led Malaysia to overcome the Asian financial crisis," he said. Dr Mahathir's vision and support made Zimbabwe realise that it had to refocus its relations and seek new partners in Asia.

This, Cde Mugabe said, had become a reality and Government would work tirelessly to ensure that relations between Zimbabwe and Malaysia grew from strength to strength while making sure that the Look East Policy contributes to the further development of the two countries. Dr Mahathir, who left Harare yesterday en route home via Lesotho to attend the Southern African International Dialogue (SAID) on smart partnerships, also presented a public lecture on civil service reforms during his three-day official visit.

Zimbabwe, Cde Mugabe said, continued to learn from the Malaysian experience being cognisant of the fact that the South East Asian country had one of the best public services in the world.

"We are determined to follow your example, that if we have the will, we will succeed, whatever the odds. Today, Malaysia is a stable and viable democracy with a strong economic base that is significantly assisting in the stabilisation of the economies of South East Asia because of the contribution you made in your years of service to your great country".

"You have, indeed, left an indelible mark in the history of your country, your region and well beyond." Cde Mugabe paid tribute to the former Malaysian premier for being at the forefront of fighting neo-colonialism and imperialism. Your roles as adviser to Proton (a Malaysian car assembly firm) and one of the eminent persons overseeing the fair trial of (former Iraqi leader) Saddam Hussein point to the important place you continue to have on the international scene," he said.

Dr Mahathir has been outspoken on issues such as the brutal occupation of Iraq by the United States and its Western allies. The President said the occupation of Iraq was a reminder of the extent to which the mighty and powerful nations could wilfully continue to violate the sovereignty of weak and small nations if the international community turned a blind eye to their evil machinations.

The former Malaysian leader chaired the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit in 2003 and highlighted the new risks posed by the post-Cold War era, chief among them being the emergence of unipolarism which had proved a dangerous threat to world peace and security.

"We ask today, my dear brother, whether Iraqis are living in a better world than that they experienced before the invasion?" Cde Mugabe said. The President paid tribute to Dr Mahathir for playing a crucial role in the founding of the global International Smart Partnership Dialogue or Langkawi International Dialogue (LID) together with its Southern Africa extension, SAID, which today have become one of the main vehicles that facilitate South-South Co-operation.

Cde Mugabe also took the opportunity to convey condolences on the untimely death of the wife of Malaysian Prime Minister Mr Abdullah Badawi.

"We share with him, his family and all Malaysians, the grief that comes with such irreplaceable loss," he said. In reply, Dr Mahathir hailed the excellent relations between Zimbabwe and Malaysia, saying there was need for countries in the South to unite in dealing with the economic challenges being faced.

"We have to look after ourselves in this world and that is why countries in the South need to come together by using their numbers because we can go down one by one. We require some strength in order to face these difficult times and we hope that this friendship between Zimbabwe and Malaysia will continue to the extent that we will be able to protect each other," he said.

The former Malaysian leader said there was a lot of instability in the world due to the emergence of international terrorism and this had been compounded by the resurgence of a unipolar world in which one superpower was trying to dictate the pace of international events.

"The Cold War has ended and there is one superpower (the United States) and we can't defect to it," Dr Mahathir said. He said he felt sorry for non-oil producing countries as some were being forced to play to the whims of the rich and powerful nations in order to source the crude oil. The situation had been worsened by the sharp increase in the price of fuel on the international market. Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said, had managed to nip terrorist activities in the bud. Among those at the dinner were Vice President Joseph Msika, Cabinet ministers, senior Government officials, members of the diplomatic corps and Malaysian nationals resident in Zimbabwe.

Source: <http://allafrica.com>