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Agong-Peru

MALAYSIA TO BACK PERU BID TO JOIN APEC

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 20 (Bernama) -- The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar said Malaysia looks forward to Peru becoming a member of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) forum in the near future.

He said Malaysia is convinced that Apec will be opened to all Pacific rim nations and that it will support Peru in realising the objective.

"We are sure that Peru will enrich our deliberations and contribute much to the common prosperity of the Pacific nations," he said at a state banquet in honour of Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori at Istana Negara tonight. Fujimori arrived today for a three-day state visit.

Apec, formed in 1989, groups Australia, Brunei, Canada, China, Chile, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and the United States.

Tuanku Ja'afar said Fujimori's visit would provide a good opportunity to witness the positive developments and changes taking place in Malaysia.

"I believe that our two governments intend to conclude some agreements to foster economic and technical cooperation in agriculture, primary commodities and land development," he said.

Tuanku Ja'afar said as a small country, Malaysia relies a great deal on external trade for its economic growth and well-being, and constantly looks for new markets and new opportunities for economic cooperation.

The Malaysian government looked forward to further joint discussions with Peru on appropriate measures to be taken to expand bilateral trade and facilitate joint-venture projects.

Tuanku Ja'afar also noted that a Malaysian company had become part owner of the only hotel in Macchu Picchu, the ancient Inca city in Peru.

His Majesty had visited Peru in 1991 while Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad visited the country in October 1995 during which several agreements were signed to provide a framework for promoting more tangible ties.

Tuanku Ja'afar also said the first Malaysian ambassador to Peru had assumed his post in Lima in October last year.

"With both countries having resident missions in each other's capital, this augurs well for the future of our bilateral relations," the King said.

At the dinner, Tuanku Ja'afar conferred the Darjah Utama Seri Mahkota (DMN) (The Most Exalted Order of the Crown) on Fujimori who reciprocated by presenting his country's "Sol Del Peru" (The Sun of Peru) Order to the King.

The DMN is only limited to 30 persons, 15 of whom may be foreign royalty, heads of state or very distinguished persons.

In his reply, Fujimori described Malaysia's advancement into one of the most progressive nations in Asia as an outstanding experience which stimulated the imagination and is a model to follow.

He said Peru had also undergone a difficult period of national reconstruction but with highly successful results.

"Our country overcame the grave afflictions of hyperinflation, terrorist violence, international isolation and chaos, and today the country rides the first waves of economic development," he said.

Fujimori said with his visit this time around he brought a firm commitment to continue to contribute, as Malaysia does, towards an even closer bilateral relationship for mutual benefits.

This is Fujimori's second visit to Kuala Lumpur after the first in November 1991.

He noted that Malaysian investment in the Peruvian tourism sector, in particular, was growing since Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's visit to his country last year which also led to fruitful contacts between Peruvian entrepreneurs and their Malaysian counterparts.

Also present were Dr Mahathir and his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, President of the Senate Datuk Adam Kadir and members of Fujimori's delegation comprising cabinet ministers and corporate leaders.

-- BERNAMA

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