

SEMINAR ON BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue to intensify economic relations with Malaysia, through several opportunities offered to Malaysian business people, ranging from opportunities for new investments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, establishment of common investment with Bosnia and Herzegovina partners in markets of third countries and advancing cooperation in tourism in both countries, said Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Sven Alkalaj in his welcoming address at a Seminar on Business and Investment Opportunities in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 14 November 2007 at the Crowne Plaza Mutiara, Kuala Lumpur.

He said the specific sectors that would be of interest for both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Malaysian business people are the energy sector, the food industry, infrastructure projects and information technology.

He also stressed the significant opportunities through the cooperation in the military industry sector, which Bosnia-Herzegovina products are recognized worldwide.

The seminar which was jointly organized by the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA), Malaysia South-South Association

(MASSA) and Foreign Investment Promotion Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FIPA) was officiated by the Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry, Y.B. Ng Lip Yong.

Also present is the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Malaysia, H.E. Mr. Mustafa Mujezinovic.

The forum was attended by some 100 participants comprised of local businessmen, Bosnia and Herzegovina businessman, and foreign representatives in Malaysia and Malaysian government officials.

In his keynote address, Y.B. Ng Lip Yong said that as a new emerging market, Bosnia and Herzegovina offers good opportunities to Malaysia in term of trade of goods as well as services.

“The bilateral trade between Malaysia and Bosnia and Herzegovina has grown over the last five years, expanding at an average annual growth of 253.8 per cent. Exports have increased at an average annual rate of 58 per cent over the last five years. In 2006 alone, exports were valued at US\$165,154.00, an increase of 111.8 per cent over 2005”, he said.

In 2006, Malaysia’s imports from Bosnia and Herzegovina reached US\$1.9 million which was an increase of 219.8 per cent from 2005. From January – August this year, Malaysia’s total trade with Bosnia and Herzegovina had surpassed the total trade recorded for the whole year of 2006. This was driven by a significant jump in Malaysia’s export to Bosnia-Herzegovina this year.

He said, even though the volume of trade between both countries is still small, there is room for expansion. Therefore, Bosnia and Herzegovina business communities are encouraged to look towards the East and source for products from Malaysia since it is a significant global sourcing hub, ranking among the top 20's trading nations in the world.

Currently, Malaysian companies investing in Bosnia and Herzegovina are in the construction of residential and commercial buildings under the Township Development Project as well as City Centre Project.

The Deputy Minister also encouraged Bosnia and Herzegovina to send more students to study in Malaysia, which provides high quality educations at affordable costs. At present, more that 35,000 foreign students from all over the world are studying in Malaysia.

“Malaysian companies can also offer their expertise in the construction of energy plants which will help Bosnia and Herzegovina to become the net exporter of power to the region. This is based on Malaysia’s success story in building and operating energy plants in West Asian countries which show their technologies capabilities and skills to undertake such projects,” he added.

The Bosnian business communities are also encouraged to source more wooden products from Malaysia which has the ability to produce a wide variety of products that comply with international standards.

The seminar was proceeded with presentations on Business Opportunities in Bosnia by Mrs. Slavica Korica of Foreign Investment Promotion Agency (FIPA), Mr. Milan Lovric, President of the Foreign Trade Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Mr. Amir Sahovic, Head of Economic Diplomacy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, followed by business meetings between Bosnians delegates and Malaysian businessmen.