

29 JUL 1997

DR M: M'SIA TO USE NAMIBIA AS EXPORT BASE TO SOUTHERN AFRICA

By: Michael Raj

LANGKAWI, July 29 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will use Namibia as an export base to other Southern African countries, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad here today.

Both countries would endeavour to form joint ventures based on smart partnerships to penetrate the African markets, he told reporters after holding bilateral talks with Namibian President Dr Sam Nujoma.

Dr Mahathir also said Malaysia also would pursue new areas of co-operation with Windhoek to further expand commercial linkages.

Currently, a number of Malaysian companies have invested in Namibia's property sector, including one that was building a hotel.

Dr Mahathir also said that both he and Dr Sam were happy with the current level of relations between the two countries.

Dr Sam said Malaysian companies could avail themselves to new markets in Angola, Congo and Zambia by using Namibia as a platform.

Asked by a Namibian reporter why Dr Mahathir was pushing for smart partnership, he said: "It is all because of human selfishness...because everybody wants to get something for himself."

"Previously only one side gets everything, the other side gets nothing," he said in reference to many developing countries which gained very little in their relations with developed countries.

"In smart partnership, everybody stands to gain and if we gain, the idea will catch on. That is why the Langkawi International Dialogue has spawned a similar dialogue in Southern Africa with the first one held in Botswana last May," he added.

Uganda Vice President, Dr Specioza Wandina Kazibwe, who emerged from bilateral talks with Dr Mahathir, said Telekom Malaysia officials would visit her country next month to explore investment opportunities.

She said Uganda can be the information hub for the Southern African region as well as for information technology.

Besides this, she said Malaysian investors have also been invited to transfer their expertise in palm oil and rubber-based industries to Uganda.

"Together we can manufacture resource-based products for export to the region," she said.

Dr Mahathir also had bilateral meetings with the Vice President of Madagascar, Herrzo Razasimahaleo, Vice-President of Ghana, Prof John Evans Attamiles, Prime Minister of Swaziland, Dr Sibusiso Barnabes Dlamini and the President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. -- BERNAMA

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