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11 heads of governments to attend LID '97

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ELEVEN heads of governments, including First Prime Minister in exile Prince Norodom Ranariddh, have confirmed their attendance at the third Langkawi International Dialogue (LID '97), to be held on the island from July 28 to 30.

Science Adviser in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Datuk Dr Omar Abdul Rahman said although Ranariddh had earlier confirmed his attendance, given the present situation in Cambodia, he is unsure whether the first prime minister will make it to the dialogue.

A list of potential heads of state who might attend LID '97 also includes Cambodia's Second Prime Minister Hun Sen, Ranariddh's bitter rival in the ongoing conflict for control of Cambodia. Hun Sen has not confirmed his attendance.

"Whatever the case, we will consult with Wisma Putra (the Foreign Ministry) on the attendance of Cambodia's prime ministers (should they decide to attend), as we do with all the heads of state attending LID '97," Dr Omar said at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Other heads of state who have confirmed their attendance include Botswana President Sir Ketumile Masire, Namibian President Dr Sam Nujoma, Zimbabwe President Dr Robert G. Mugabe, and Malawi vice president Justin Malewezi. All of whom attended LID '96.

Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and Ghana Vice President Prof John Evans Atta Mills have also confirmed that they will attend the dialogue, which carries the theme "Smart Partnership in Action".

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has confirmed his attendance at LID '97, as have his counterparts Pascal Rakotomavo of Madagascar, Navin Ramgoolam of Mauritius and Prince Jameson Mbilini Dlamini of Swaziland.

Eleven ministers will attend the dialogue, including three each from Malaysia and Zimbabwe, two from Namibia, and one each from Seychelles, Tonga and Malawi.

LID '97 will be divided into four sessions covering company and inter-company experiences, cooperative frameworks beyond national borders, technology for emerging economies, and technology in financial services.

"There will also be hands-on demonstrations of applications of technology in electronic commerce and the finance sector," said Dr Omar, who is also joint chairman of the Malaysian Industry Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT) and joint secretary of the International Advisory Council for LID '97.

"The Langkawi International Dialogue has truly taken on an international dimension. We have received positive comments on LID as well as on its spin-offs," he said.

LID '97 is jointly organised by MIGHT and the Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management. Since the first dialogue in 1995, LID has become a model for the setting up of the Barbados International Dialogue (BID '96) and the Southern African International Dialogue (SAID '97).

Earlier, Dr Omar received cheques from LID '97 sponsors. Main sponsors Malaysian Resources Corp Bhd, Sapura Group and Telekom Malaysia Bhd each gave RM500,000, while corporate sponsors YTL Corp Bhd, Chase Perdana Bhd, Ekran Bhd and SungeiWay Bhd each presented RM100,000.

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