

31/07/1997

Giving a new dimension to politics

FOREIGN heads of Governments and Ministers said yesterday that smart partnership would strengthen them not just economically but also in the social and political sphere.

Representing 10 countries from Asia and Africa, the Presidents, Prime Ministers and Ministers pronounced the 3rd Langkawi International Dialogue a success, at a final dialogue chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday evening.

Ghana's Vice-President Professor John Atta Mills said smart partnerships could show the way forward for African countries that were "being left further behind".

Mills added, however, that clear national objectives were needed to ensure a successful implementation.

Jordan's Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali, however, cautioned that while smart partnership was good, there was a need for more dialogues between civil servants of participating countries to ensure smooth execution of ideas that have been discussed.

Others like Professor Pakalitha Mosisili, Deputy Prime Minister of Lesotho said their participation in LID '97 was an indication of a commitment to smart partnership as an effective strategy for enhanced development in which everyone came out a winner.

He said the concept had taken root in Lesotho and a task force to kick-start a National Economic Consultative was being planned.

First time participant Madagascar, represented by Vice-Prime Minister Herizo Razafimahaleo, said he would leave Langakawi enriched and with the knowledge that "miracles are possible".

He described Malaysia as proof of a country that had "made it" and yet retained its values and culture.

He added that smart partnership was effective in achieving political stability, poverty eradication and sustainable development.

One aspect that was said to be "little discussed" by Tanzania's Minister of Energy and Minerals Dr Abdallah Omar Kigoda was smart partnerships in politics.

He was commenting on the Malaysian example cited by Dr Mahathir in his opening speech on Monday.

He said as developing countries experienced political changes, matters that should be discussed include strengthening of civil society, building partnerships across political divides and the promotion of dialogue among political partners.

Also speaking at the three-hour closing session were Mozambique's Minister in the Presidency for Economy Eneas Da Conceicao Comiche, Philippine Secretary of Science and Technology William G. Padolina, South Africa's Minister of Public Works J.T. Radebe and Prime Minister of Swaziland Dr Sibusiso Dlamini.

In closing, Namibian President Dr Sam Nujoma announced that the Southern African International Dialogue will be held next year and preparation would begin as soon as their team got back to Namibia.

(END)