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Langkawi meet broaches wide range of issues

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THE three-day Langkawi International Dialogue '97 (LID) which began yesterday saw members discussing various issues ranging from how to enhance smart partnership to the beating that regional currencies suffered from international speculative attacks.

The third LID '97 has received overwhelming response with attendance from over 300 participants, Dr Ahmad Tasir Lope Pihie, chief executive of the Malaysian Industry Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT), told reporters.

He said that the first day of the dialogue attempted to seek optimum contribution and participation from individual members.

He said some 25 examples on company and inter-company experiences and successes - such as Malaysia Airlines System's code share, the setting up of Technology Park Malaysia and the privatization of Port Klang - were presented.

Participants sought to strengthen their understanding of Smart Partnership by emphasising the need for cooperation, cooperative competition, shared vision and goals as well as the recognition that the concept has grown to become more of a rule than an exception.

LID is organised by the Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management Ltd and MIGHT.

Another important aspect of Smart Partnership discussed was the need for systematic planning and sharing of equity wealth with emphasis on a win-win situation.

Mr Timothy Ong from Brunei's National Insurance Company Bhd who spoke on "International Public-Private Sector Partnership - Apec Business Advisory Council" said the best contemporary models of Smart Partnership within national boundaries is Malaysia.

He also said that of all the international partnerships, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) grouping is the best as it envelopes a wide range of countries which are developing, developed as well as industrialising economies.

He described Apec as an attempt to transcend the North-South device.

However, he said with regard to Smart Partnership, Apec should be given more time as it was only formed in 1989 and also because of its diversity.

Meanwhile, the second day of the dialogue will see Promet Bhd taking the concept of Smart Partnership a step further today when it signs a RM200 million housing development project with the Zimbabwe Government.

Executive director and chief operating officer Lee Keat Hin said the five-year plan is expected to commence operations in five months and although it is a comparatively small venture, it is a "good start".

In fact, Promet already has another housing development project in the country which began six months ago.

Lee who has attended LID '96 and is currently in Langkawi for the third dialogue said such sessions helped entrepreneurs exchange their views on their experiences and even, clinch deals.

Namibian President Dr Sam Nujoma pointed out to reporters that there is a need for "genuine dialogue on Smart Partnership and trade cooperation" particularly with regard to South-South cooperation.

"There can be no genuine peace if nations and humankind do not make great efforts to eradicate poverty. Nations should make a great effort to ensure that as we enter the 21st century, there should be peace all over

the world. There can be no peace if people are poor and exploited by others," he continued.

Tenaga Nasional Bhd executive chairman Datuk Ahmad Tajuddin Ali, who has attended all three Langkawi dialogues, said he is exploring opportunities for the utility company in some of the African countries.

"Discussions are going on and we are firming up something as a few governments here look upon Malaysia as an example to provide input as our power sector is quite big," he said.

The dialogue also saw participants eager to discuss the issue of the speculative attacks on the regional currencies.

According to Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam, Group corporate adviser of Sungeiway Group, there were suggestions from participants that a regional forum on the subject of international currency speculation be held.

He said participants are eager and hopeful that the issue will be brought up by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in his special closed session with heads of state/governments.

Navaratnam added that the issue is of importance as such attacks can seriously undermine the cooperation and collaboration among countries and negate any form of cooperation that has been built.

He added that the issue of currency will most probably be brought up at the session on Technology in Financial Services which will be held on Wednesday.

Earlier, MAS executive chairman Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli, who is LID '97 International Advisory Council joint chairman, said although several participants have voiced their interest in discussing the currency issue, it was not for the LID to come up with a solution to the problem.

However, such discussions can help to propagate ideas that may be brought forward to other forums for international resolution and adoption.

On the LID, he said the Malaysian Government has taken the dialogues "very seriously" and already there are plans by most participants to have an LID '98.

"Smart partnership will only be successful if it can benefit everyone and not just a few people and all cooperating parties should take advantage of this partnership.

"This partnership opposes the concept of zero-sum that only cares for one's own benefit.

"If we accept this philosophy, then there will not be a problem of selfishness where one party stands to gain at the expense of the other," Tajudin added.

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