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Mahathir-Africa

MAHATHIR TAKES CENTRE STAGE IN AFRICAN MEET

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KASANE (Botswana), May 5 (Bernama) -- African leaders gathering here for the first time to map out common strategies to make their region an economic giant, got a taste of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's recipe on how a nation should be managed.

Sharing Malaysia's wide and successful experience, the Prime Minister told the leaders that they should set out their goals and strategies clearly and carry it out in stages if they want to become like the Asean "tigers" or in this case "lions".

Dr Mahathir who has been given the honour to become the only non-African leader to participate in the first Southern Africa International Dialogue (Said) told them that Malaysia had achieved what is today because of long-term and careful planning.

The Prime Minister is also in Botswana for an official visit.

Among the seven African leaders attending the dialogue being held in this safari town, located some 1,300 km north of Gaborone, the capital of Botswana, are the presidents of Botswana Sir Ketumile Masire, Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, Dr Bakili Muluzi of Malawi, Namibia's Dr Samuel Nujoma and Ghana's Jerry Rawlings, all of whom Dr Mahathir has close relationship.

The meeting is also being attended by senior representatives from Angola, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia.

According to Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management (CPTM) chairman Tan Sri Dr Omar Abdul Rahman, who is the co-organising chairman of the dialogue, the Prime Minister explained to the leaders how the various economic strategies of the country were implemented.

Firstly, the country has to create the right and conducive climate for foreign investors such as proper infrastructures and the necessary tax incentives, not to mention political stability.

Secondly, after all the investments are in place, they should ensure that their people reap the benefits from it such as the creation of employment and so on.

And thirdly, once they have achieved these "requirements", they should then seek a balance approach in their economic development by taking into account the environment, cultures, value systems and so on.

"Malaysia is at the third stage now," Dr Omar said when briefing Malaysian journalists what the Prime Minister had told the leaders during their special closed session yesterday.

Dr Omar said the African leaders shared their different experiences and exchanged views amid the many confrontations and conflicts between them before.

Topics of discussions included how the privatisation projects which have been set in motion in many southern African countries could become an implementator of national development programmes.

"They also spoke about the involvement of the black community in the privatisation projects in what President Mugabe called the empowerment of the black," he said.

Mugabe, Dr Omar said, wanted to know how to establish a win-win situation between the blacks and the whites who control the economy in Zimbabwe (and in most of the African countries).

The theme of the dialogue referred to as the business forum which ends on May 7 is "Smart Partnership for the Generation of the Wealth in Southern

Africa". -- BERNAMA
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