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OVERWHELMING RESPONSE TO LID '97

By: R. Ravichandran & Michael Raj

LANGKAWI, July 26 (Bernama) -- Response to the Third Langkawi International Dialogue 1997 (LID '97), which begins here Monday, has been overwhelming with the organisers trying to accommodate last-minute participants.

The joint secretary of LID '97, Tan Sri Dr. Omar Abdul Rahman, said some 350 participants, who include many heads of government from the world over, are eager to "brainstorm" and share their ideas and in the process create "smart partnerships."

"We only expected 250, but now we are making last-minute preparations to take in an extra 100 people for the dialogue," he told Bernama while overseeing preparations at the Berjaya Langkawi Beach and Spa Resort here.

Botswana's President, Sir Ketumile Masire, was the first head of government to arrive here yesterday followed by Swaziland's Prime Minister, Dr. Sibusiso B. Dlamini, and Jordan's Prime Minister, Dr. Abd Salam Al Majali today.

The other heads of government -- President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Namibian President Dr. Sam Nujoma and Mauritius Prime Minister Dr. Navin Ramgoolam -- are expected tomorrow.

Besides heads of governments, vice-presidents, deputy prime ministers and ministers from countries such as Malawi, Mozambique, Seychelles and Ghana as well as corporate leaders are set to join the LID.

Elaborating on this year's theme, "Smart Partnership in Action," Dr. Omar, who is also Science Advisor to the Prime Minister, said participants would share at least 25 experiences of smart partnerships.

"We want to learn what makes smart partnerships tick and how they can be applied at all times," he said.

The smart partnership concept -- matching government, companies and workers to do business in an international context -- which made its debut at the 1995 LID.

This subsequently laid the foundation for a new business wave and heralded innovative management practices for the future, based on what Dr. Mahathir has all along been propagating, the "prosper thy neighbour" philosophy.

While the first and second dialogues focussed on exploring the concept of smart partnerships, LID '97 would review the success in the application of smart partnerships.

"We are talking about action in LID '97," said Dr. Omar.

However, he said smart partnerships were not just about clinching business deals, rather it was how all components of society, comprising the government, private sector and the people plus consumers could effectively synergise their resources towards one direction.

"More often than not, successful business leaders kept ideas to themselves, but here through discussions on an informal basis, ideas would be shared with a common vision of forging a beneficial partnership in the long term."

Dr Omar said although the heads of government mostly came from Southern African and Caribbean nations, the LID is not a gathering for developing countries alone.

In contrast, it comprises key corporate leaders from the developed world as well, and together with the respective components of society would "try to pull together in the same direction towards achieving global

prosperity."

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, who is also the patron and adviser of LID, will deliver a keynote address on Monday night at the gathering, which is jointly organised by the Malaysian Industry - Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT) and the Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management (CPTM). -- BERNAMA

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