

01/08/1997

Participants discover how smart partnerships work

Saiful Azhar Abdullah

IF at the previous two Langkawi International Dialogues, participants were given an insight into the "win-win situation" concept best illustrated by the "prosper-thy-neighbour" and Malaysia Incorporated concepts by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, this year they discovered how smart partnerships worked to ensure political stability.

They learned how the Barisan Nasional coalition maintained political stability and the concept of smart partnerships in politics.

Smart partnerships, the theme of the Prime Minister's keynote address at this year's third Langkawi International Dialogue, have led to incredible economic transformations in the country.

Dr Mahathir's thoughts about smart partnerships in politics should have been useful to the heads of Government, especially at a time when businessmen are beginning to take a cautious approach when expanding overseas following the political uncertainty in Cambodia.

Those who benefited the most were African heads of Government who are striving to erase the remaining specks of doubt about political stability in their region.

The presence of Southern African leaders at this year's dialogue also reflected their admiration of Dr Mahathir's administration.

This was illustrated by their interest in the dialogue and their eagerness to adopt some of the economic mechanisms to push their economies into high gear.

They even had a similar dialogue in Kasane, Botswana, earlier this year which was attended by Dr Mahathir.

It was evident that the foreign heads of Governments and Ministers saw smart partnerships as a concept that showed them the way forward not just in the field of economics but also in the social and political sectors.

Towards the end of the dialogue on Wednesday, the Presidents, Prime Ministers and Ministers representing 10 countries from Asia and Africa pronounced LID '97 a success.

Ghana's Vice-President Professor John Atta Mills described smart partnerships as a way forward for African countries which have been lagging behind.

Professor Pakalitha Mosisili, Deputy Prime Minister of Lesotho, regarded smart partnerships as an effective strategy for enhancing development in which everyone was not only a participant but a winner.

Even a first-timer like Madagascar Vice-Prime Minister Herizo Razafimahaleo found the smart partnership concept able to make "miracles possible".

In other words, after three dialogues, the participants have finally reached a consensus that smart partnerships are an ideal way of doing business or governing a country.

In fact, the concept is practical and workable in every aspect of life including, according to Dr Mahathir, marriage.

This being the case, it may be high time for everybody to start putting the smart partnership concept into practice.

The presence of the heads of Government at LID '97 was significant, as the leaders are the ones who can make the concept a reality.

They should be the implementors of smart partnerships. They should take the lead in their respective countries.

Accepting smart partnerships as an ideal concept is insufficient if

action does not follow.

Considering the response of participants to LID '97, it is clear that the dialogue is catching on - very fast.

It has not only turned into a session to discuss the concept and philosophy of smart partnerships, but has also emerged as a platform for business interaction.

And this year, businessmen have begun taking advantage of the dialogue to clinch smart partnership deals.

The first to take the advantage of the situation was Malaysia Airlines System which signed an agreement with General Electric Company of United States to operate an aircraft engine overhaul service.

ZimMal-Promet will also develop residential units and associated facilities in new and existing police camps in Zimbabwe.

The LID is not only just "talk at a coffee shop" as labelled by some envious observers. It is blossoming into a true forum and platform in the real meaning of smart partnerships.

(END)