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Smart partnership benefits all: Dr M

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DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday Malaysia's smart partnership proposal is gaining popularity worldwide but advised that ensuring fair and equitable profits to all partners is essential under the concept.

The Prime Minister, in acknowledging the existence of several kinds of partnerships, said, "There are of course many different kinds of partnership but sometimes a partnership results in one party gaining much more than the other, and in some cases, one party gains at the expense of the other.

"However, under the Malaysian concept of smart partnership, both parties, irrespective of size and contribution should gain fairly," he said, when launching the six-day Japan's Oita Prefecture One Village One Product and Tourism Promotion in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

In stressing his appreciation of Oita Governor Morihiko Hiramatsu's call to establish a smart partnership between Malaysia and the prefecture, Dr Mahathir said, the concept has been gaining acceptance not only within the country but also in countries such as South Africa and Caribbean nations.

"We hope that when people establish such a partnership, they do so to benefit all partners, not just one partner," he said, adding that Malaysia is willing to establish this with Oita Prefecture which is located on the island of Kyushu in Japan.

In fact, Dr Mahathir said relations with Kyushu island, and especially Oita Prefecture, have been growing stronger since his visit in 1989.

"We owe a lot to Oita and its Governor, who has made the call to establish a special relationship between Kyushu island, particularly Oita and countries in South-East Asia.

"In fact, we had four conferences where Kyushu and South-East Asian countries participated: this year, the conference was held in Langkawi.

Impressed with Oita's "One Village One Product" concept, Dr Mahathir said the system has been widely accepted by other states, after it was introduced in Kedah.

"I am very impressed with the system where each village should have one product of its own in order to enhance the income of its people.

"This idea has been very successful in Oita and people in Oita. Rural folk, particularly, have managed to increase their income by identifying a product that is suitable for a particular village.

"It struck me that this system could also be applied in Malaysia... when I returned from Oita a few years ago. I urged Kedah to establish special relations with Oita and adopt the One Village One Product system," he added.

The Prime Minister said the concept has caught on in Kedah and helped boost the income of villagers in the state. The idea has also been accepted by other states in Malaysia.

"Through this exhibition, I hope the people in Kuala Lumpur who visit this fair will be able to see how rural development can be carried out which not only benefits rural areas but also the country in general.

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