

27 JUL 1999

LID-Partner

LID NOT READY TO INVITE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AS PARTNERS

LANGKAWI, July 27 (Bernama) -- The Langkawi International Dialogue (LID) is not ready to include developed countries as their dialogue partners at the moment, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"If we take developed countries as partners, there is a tendency for them to dominate things. Because of this, we are not quite happy to include them in the dialogue," he said.

The present arrangement was fine, he told a press conference at the end of the four-day LID '99, here.

Mozambique President Joaquim Alberto Chissano added: "In Africa, we have little things to call smart by the other side (developed countries), until we reach their stage then only we can invite them,".

Botswana President, Festus Gontebanye Mogae, said the dialogue has to include everybody ultimately at the end.

This is the fourth LID since the first was held in 1995.

The dialogue partners was expanded to also include representatives from the business sector from developing and developed countries.

The leaders today sprang a surprise during the press conference by asking media representatives questions instead of them being on the receiving end -- almost similar to the one held on Sunday.

But this time, the media representatives -- local and foreign -- were allowed to ask questions.

First Ladies were also included to participate in the press conference this time.

The media panel included New Straits Times Press group editor-in-chief Datuk Kadir Jasin, NSTP editor-at-large, Hardev Kaur, Utusan Malaysia deputy group editor-in-chief, Sirajuddin Rafia, the Star's business editor, Wong Sulong and NST group editor Ahmad A. Talib.

-- BERNAMA

JM KTC