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MAHATHIR-LID

LID TO PROVIDE POSITIVE DIRECTIONS, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

By: E.Sivabalan

LANGKAWI, July 24 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has set the pace for the fourth Langkawi International Dialogue (LID) which kicks off here tomorrow by asking the participants to "peel back the many layers" of the Asian financial crisis.

The prime minister said by doing so, the participants comprising leaders of emerging economies and captains of industries, would be able to identify the "core issues."

He expressed confidence that the four-day LID '99 would provide positive directions to help shape future policies at both regional and international levels on ways of expediting economic recovery and to prevent future crisis.

The three days of deliberations would present invaluable opportunity for the participants to consider the Asian crisis from many perspectives, he said in his message in the LID '99 souvenir book.

Dr Mahathir said past experience indicated that the LID series of dialogues was indeed an excellent forum for the sharing of views and experiences.

"The LID '99 will see the concept of Smart Partnership translated into a working paradigm, where heads of state and government and captains of industries will discuss issues on macro economic matters, and strengthening of the corporate sector, and corporate governance, among others," Dr Mahathir said.

The prime minister said Malaysia had undertaken these important steps to ensure the non-disruption of the socio-economic fabric of the Malaysian society.

Dr Mahathir said this year's LID with the theme, "Managing Economic Recovery for Shared Prosperity - the Smart Partnership Approach" was not only appropriate but also timely.

He said the topic of the Asian economic crisis has dominated the headlines throughout the world since September 1997.

"Over the last 24 months as the Asian crisis deepened and other countries of the world including South Africa, Brazil and Russia began to show signs of economic malaise, new questions have emerged," said the prime minister.

He said of particular interest was the role of alleged domestic mismanagement and financial excesses of developing countries versus that of inherent international systematic instability, in causing and aggravating the financial meltdown of Asia.

"The international system of capital markets has seen radical transformation in the recent years due to the unprecedented advancement in information technology.

"Today, we have an interdependent, inter-linked global financial system with the ability to transmit information and financial transactions at incredible speed," Dr Mahathir said.

He said while making a substantial contribution to living standards worldwide, the unregulated environment in which it operates provides a tremendous potential for abuse, causing untold human misery.

Dr Mahathir said he was confident that the international community shared a concern for stability in international markets, underpinned by long-term sustainable and equitable human developments.

"The contagion effect of the crisis has demonstrated first-hand how the

global systems of finance, trade and information today render geographical boundaries irrelevant," he added. -- BERNAMA

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