

16 JUL 1999
LID-SPOUSES
SITI HASMAH TO LEAD LADIES DIALOGUE AT LID '99

KUALA LUMPUR, July 16 (Bernama) -- Spouses of some 11 heads of government attending the 4th Langkawi International Dialogue (LID '99) from July 25-28 will hold discussions on how women can contribute to economic recovery during the financial crisis.

"First ladies are leaders in their own right and can contribute significantly during interactions at Langkawi," Tan Sri Dr Omar Abdul Rahman, the chairman of the Malaysian Industry-Group for High Technology (MIGHT), said.

Dr Omar, who is also Science Advisor to the Prime Minister, said this was a new feature of LID '99 which was included following special requests by the spouses themselves.

Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah is expected to moderate the special session but the spouses will also join their husbands in other interactions during the dialogue which has attracted some 300 participants from 38 countries.

He said this after a cheque presentation ceremony during which MIGHT received sponsorships to the tune of RM512,000 from 21 major corporations, both local and foreign.

Telekom, the major sponsor for the event to the tune of RM1.5 million, had signed a sponsorship agreement earlier.

"The quantum of sponsorship received demonstrates a healthy show of support from the corporate sector for the dialogue," said Dr Omar.

Besides the 11 heads of government, he said the latest to confirm his participation was Taiwanese Minister of Finance Dr Paul Chiu Cheng-hsiung.

Dr Paul, along with Malaysian officials, will relate the experiences of how their respective economies coped with the financial crisis by taking recovery measures without the tutelage of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

By contrast, Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister Dr Supachai Panitchpakdi will give the experience of a country which received financial assistance from the IMF, he said.

The Smart Partnership concept made its debut at the first LID in July 1995.

Smart Partnership promotes networking, not only between business sectors in a national and international context but also between governments, the business sector, labour unions and other interest groups, to explore opportunities to promote investment, business and prosperity.

This year's dialogue is themed "Managing Economic Recovery for Shared Prosperity - The Smart Partnership Approach."

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will moderate a session entitled "LID '99, The Way Forward 2000 and Beyond" which will include interventions from the heads of government.

Dr Omar said there will also be another special session among business leaders as well as presentations led by Malaysia Airports Bhd on the smart partnership winning formula of the Formula One project with emphasis on business opportunities, technology transfer as well as tourism promotion and publicity. -- BERNAMA

MR LPS