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LID-LESOTHO
IT'S OK FOR M'SIA TO CHAMPION AFRICANS' INTERESTS

LANGKAWI, Nov 21 (Bernama) -- Lesotho Prime Minister Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili today said he saw no harm in Malaysia's initiative in championing the interests of African countries through the spirit of Smart Partnership.

"What's wrong with that?" he said when asked on the matter after paying a courtesy call on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the sidelines of the Langkawi International Dialogue 2000 (LID 2000) here.

Some Western media reports had insinuated that Malaysia was patronising African countries in its efforts to champion their interests.

Mosisili said everything good for Malaysia was also good for Africa as the country was "in the same sphere of development with us."

"Surely it (Malaysia) is in a better position to cooperate with us and show us the way, so to speak," he said in reference to Malaysia's "admirable development."

On his meeting with Dr Mahathir, Mosisili said they exchanged views on a number of issues and how the participants could move the smart partnership movement forward and how it could be more focused and result-oriented.

Both leaders also discussed how Malaysia and Lesotho could cooperate for mutual benefit.

Mosisili said he also urged Dr Mahathir to encourage Malaysian investors to consider Lesotho as one of their investment destinations.

Some of the areas that could be of interest to them were information and communication technology, education, and infrastructure development, he added.

Malaysian companies could also help produce a national identity card for Lesotho's population, he said.

Mosisili was fascinated with Malaysia's General Multi-Purpose Card project which was showcased at LID 2000, saying it inspired him to introduce a national identity card system in Lesotho.

Mosisili said, "In fact we have a (Malaysian) delegation coming to Lesotho early next year."

Malaysia and Lesotho were also negotiating an agreement that would form the basis of various types of cooperation, he added. -- BERNAMA

MK NH YBY