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Dr M: Pursue knowledge vigorously

PRIME MINISTER Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday urged the developing world to vigorously pursue knowledge, saying that developed countries had eagerly embraced the new knowledge-driven economy.

Dr Mahathir said knowledge was the domain of everyone in the world and cut across all strata of economic activities.

It was not limited to just cutting-edge technology and the Information and Communication Technology sector, he said in his speech at the Smart Partnership gala held in conjunction with the Southern Africa International Dialogue (SAID 2000) yesterday.

Citing Malaysia as an example, Dr Mahathir said the country had embarked on a drive to intensify knowledge used in all sectors of the economy, new and traditional.

This entailed the concerted effort of all stakeholders in the Malaysian economy "to acquire and generate bodies of knowledge".

"Coupled with the ability to effectively translate knowledge into technological and social advancement that elevates the living standards of the populace, this is empowerment in its truest sense," he stressed.

Dr Mahathir also spoke on technology-based economic development which he described as "a different phenomenon".

Technological advancement "dances to a different tune" and technology widens the gap between the technological haves and have-nots as regions with advanced technologies are best placed to further innovate.

Innovation requires physical, financial and social infrastructure - demanding even to the most advanced nations.

A developing country with limited resources and a multitude of needs will fail to innovate.

Emerging economies must see the process of globalisation from all aspects.

Most decision making at international level seem to safeguard the interests of the more matured economies without regard to national sovereignty, economic freedom and empowerment, socio-economic programmes and technology development agenda being undertaken by developing nations.

The Prime Minister pointed out that it was in this context that the Smart Partnership would have the most impact.

Smart Partnership can help unify concerns and actions and to formulate a common stand and embark on co-operative actions in order to counter perceived negative forces of globalisation affecting emerging economies.

Smart Partnerships such as SAID 2000 can serve as focal points to deliberate and share views and experiences and to nurture continued interaction among members and partners.

The Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management (CPTM), he said, could assume a catalytic role in synergising the different dimensions of globalisation with win-win results.

National Smart Partnership hubs will have to work together with CPTM and set priorities for action.

For this the Prime Minister offers the assistance of Malaysia Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT).

He also touched on Malaysia's unorthodox policies in overcoming the recent crisis which have "reluctantly been accepted by the international community as a viable alternative to the IMF prescription".

Even as they admit that a "cure all" for the world's economic ills does

not exist a new "prescription" is being forced down the throats of
developing countries.

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