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LID-SAID

MAHATHIR: SAID 2001 IN UGANDA TO FOCUS ON ATTRACTING FDI

LANGKAWI, Nov 21 (Bernama) -- Next year's Southern Africa International Dialogue (SAID 2001) to be held in Kampala, Uganda, will focus on attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) into developing countries, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Attracting FDI into these areas has always been one of the problems faced by them and SAID 2001 in August would find a way to overcome that, he told a media conference at the end of the heads of state and government dialogue sessions at the Langkawi International Dialogue 2000 (LID 2000) here.

This year's LID focused mainly on how to manage globalisation and find ways for developing countries to adapt and prepare for the New Economy.

Dr Mahathir said LID 2000 also touched on the need to communicate more between the heads of government and senior officials and the setting up of "hubs" among participating countries of the smart partnership movement.

He said, "This morning we decided on certain structural matters, mainly in the setting up of 'hubs' in each country, the question of financing the 'hubs' and the structure of the 'hubs'."

The Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management Ltd (CPTM), a co-organiser of LID 2000, had proposed the setting up of 'hubs' in each participating country. 'Hubs' will be the instruments under the smart partnership movement where the government and private sectors as well as labour unions, media and social groups will interact among each other and share their experiences in resolving national and public/private sector issues.

Dr Mahathir said the participants also agreed that some of the issues discussed in Langkawi such as globalisation, non-tariff barriers and intellectual property rights would be followed up through the national 'hubs' of each country.

He said: "We have decided on this issue. We should have some common stand so that when we participate in the various international fora, we will put forward similar views."

Asked on the financing aspect, Dr Mahathir said it would be financed by Commonwealth members, business sector and governments involved in the smart partnership movement.

CPTM, which is based in London, functions as a network which acts as a catalyst and a clearing house for cooperative effort among member governments, the business sector and professionals.

Dr Mahathir said discussions between CPTM fellows and media experts at a special session here came to the conclusion that there was a need for an alternative source of news originating from the countries concerned.

Some of the news reported by some media organisations, especially on developing countries, was far from the fact and was distorted, he said.

Dr Mahathir said: "We need to get the real news, otherwise we will make wrong conclusions about our fellow members. So, there is no harm in having another source for comparison purpose...we should have at least another reference source."

He said the alternative channel of news could not be created overnight as the smart partners had to give time for various newspapers to come aboard.

Dr Mahathir said at the moment Asia has the Asian News Network (ANN) that links many of the region's newspapers and helps to balance news from wire services.

This thing could be expanded to radio news as well as video clips, he said.

Touching on the framework for managing globalisation under the smart

partnership movement, Dr Mahathir said several matters on this issue were discussed and the participants had achieved considerable progress in terms of their understanding and knowledge of the way forward.

He said: "We now know how to progress and how to deal with these matters. Whether we are affected or not...it's another matter but we now understand the problem much better and we know the way forward."

On social issues, Dr Mahathir said the social issues group comprising mainly the First Ladies discussed the effects of killer diseases, including malaria which was rampant in some African countries due to the ban on DDT.

-- BERNAMA

MK YBY