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Malaysia's close ties with African nations resented by the West

HOW Ghana wished it could stand tall and tell the world "Leave us alone!" like Malaysia did last year when western rogue speculators attacked the Malaysian economy.

Ghanaian solicitor Dr Moses Ayiku said African nations were learning at the dialogue how Malaysia was able to say just that.

"Why can't Ghana tell the world 'leave us alone!' like what Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin did at last year's Langkawi International Dialogue," he said on the sideline of Global 2000-LID.

Ayiku dismissed the fear of European nations, feeling threatened by the possible economic impact of the LID, that Malaysia had patronised African nations participating in the dialogue.

"In fact, we are grateful to Malaysia for its willingness to share its experience and expertise in managing its economy," he said.

Drawing to the fact that Ghana achieved independence almost at the same time as Malaysia, Ayiku said southern African nations were eager to find out how Malaysia surged ahead of the the rest economically.

This was important, he said, because Ghana achieved its independence on March 6, 1957, almost five months earlier than Malaysia.

"We are grateful to (Prime Minister Datuk Seri) Dr Mahathir (Mohamad) for his efforts. He is leading us by example on how to lead and manage our country."

A Zimbabwean delegate had said two days ago that certain European nations, feeling threatened by the possible economic impact resulting from the LID, had accused Malaysia of patronising African countries participating in the LID.

These countries were worried that Malaysia was becoming like a "godfather to African countries", the Zimbabwean delegate had said.

Ayiku said one reason was the power wielded by world organisations like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank on African nations.

"Strict conditions are imposed on African nations and if we don't abide, they stop loans to our countries.

"Here, we are learning from Malaysia how to fight these world organisations."

Ayiku was impressed with the various economic programmes implemented by the Government and he believed that was the strongest pillar shielding Malaysia from external threats.

Meanwhile, a veteran African journalist also rejected the reported accusation by some European countries that Malaysia was exploiting the Third World economies through the smart partnership forums.

"I reject the contempt," remarked Rethabile Pholo, a senior journalist of Lesotho's Southern Star Media.

Pholo described Malaysia's efforts in helping African nations in adopting the smart partnership concept as "the actual result of the Smart Partnership which all leaders of participating countries are advocating for".

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