

13 AUG 2001

Dialogue

DR M TO LEAD TEAM TO SMART PARTNERSHIP TALKS AT KAMPALA

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 13 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will lead a high-powered delegation, comprising captains of industry and government officials, to the Global 2001 Southern Africa International Dialogue (SAID) in Kampala, Uganda from Aug 18 to 21.

Participants to the four-day dialogue on smart partnership, to be held at Speke Resort in Munyonyo on the shores of Lake Victoria, some 15 km from the Ugandan capital, would brainstorm on "Enhancing the Climate for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) through Smart Partnership".

Global 2001 is part of the international smart partnership dialogue series that includes the Langkawi International Dialogue (LID), former science advisor to the prime minister Tan Sri Dr Omar Abdul Rahman told a press conference today.

Besides Dr Mahathir, 13 heads of state and four heads of government would be attending the dialogue, which would be held for the first time in an East African state.

Previous dialogues in Africa were held in Southern Africa and the last one there last year took place in Maputo, Mozambique.

Some 350 international participants, including 60 from Malaysia, would identify strategies to attract significant levels of foreign direct investments, which are crucial to support African economies in need of investments.

Dr Omar, who is now the co-ordinator of the Malaysian Industry-Government Group of High Technology - Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management (MIGHT-CPTM) Smart Partnership Hub, said African countries were keen to learn from Malaysia on its success in attracting FDI.

While there, Dr Mahathir would open the Malaysian South-South Corporation Bhd Centre (MASSCORP) in Kampala, which would enhance opportunities for greater trade between Malaysia and Uganda.

The prime minister would also launch Smart News Network International (SNNi), a news exchange programme to counter inaccurate reporting on developing countries, at SAID.

"It is an alternative news service and developing countries will have a direct news exchange rather than depending on third parties like Reuters, AFP or CNN," he said.

Dr Omar said Malaysia's experience in attracting FDI would be relayed by sharing practical lessons and reviewing businesses by investors as well as case studies by policy makers, narrating both its successes and failures.

"That's why we have quite a big delegation of businessmen and government officials," he said.

Besides Dr Mahathir, other major participants at SAID would include Energy, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Amar Leo Moggie, Rural Development Minister Datuk Azmi Khalid, senior government officials and private businessmen.

Among the major companies participating are Telekom Malaysia Bhd, Bina Puri Holdings Bhd, Heitech Padu Bhd and YTL Corporation Bhd.

Global 2001 will concentrate on four major issues highlighted by SMART Partnership relating to FDI, namely:

\* ownership and management of economic assets (for example, land, intellectual property);

- \* investment needs of communication infrastructure;
- \* influence of the perception of risks on inward investment and the part played in the corporate governance; and
- \* means of measuring cooperativeness and risk at the macro-economic level and developing economic prosperity and creativity at the micro-economic.

Dr Mahathir will also chair several dialogue sessions and deliver a keynote address at a dinner on Aug 20.

Other highlights of SAID include a presentation by Uganda entitled, "Rising from the Dead," on its economic revival after the destructive regime of President Idi Amin over eight years.

-- BERNAMA

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