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Private sector steps up presence in Smart Partnership Dialogue

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MALAYSIA'S contributions in the Smart Partnership International Dialogue series has stimulated the private sector's interest as reflected by the greater number of participants in the Global2001 in Uganda from 18th to 21st August.

The coordinator of Might-CPTM Smart Partnership Hub which co-organises the yearly event with the Ugandan government, Tan Sri Dr Omar Abdul Rahman said more Malaysian private sector participation can be expected this year compared to the year before.

"We expect a larger number of private sector participation this year. Apart from the regulars such as Telekom, Petronas and Southern Bank, we see a greater interest shown by various sectors such as the media, banking and financial, infrastructure, education, information communication technology and hi-tech sector, and logistics and trade," he said.

The SMART Partnership Dialogue includes the Langkawi International Dialogue (LID) and the South African International Dialogue (SAID) and both of the events will be merged as the GLOBAL2001 SAID/LID Dialogue this year.

The 4-day international event is expected to be attended by between 350 to 400 participants from the African region, the Caribbean and Malaysia, comprising 14 Heads of State and 4 Heads of Government.

Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who is currently on a private visit to Europe before making an official visit to Yemen will represent Malaysia at the Dialogue.

Issues to be discussed at the Dialogue this year will centre on the theme, "Enhancing the Climate for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) through Smart Partnership".

"Africa is still grappling with the issue of attracting foreign direct investments. They see FDIs as the means of promoting economic activities and growth and they are keen to know the Malaysian experience in this particular area," Omar said.

"The President of Uganda called the LID and SAID as an idea factory with various perspectives. He sees a lot of value in the smart partnership approach of doing things," he added.

On the benefits of smart partnership Omar cited Dr Mahathir's philosophy in that the Dialogue is a forum to help other countries in the context of Prosper Thy Neighbour framework.

"We want to share our experience in development with other developing countries since they can relate better to our experience compared to the developed countries'," Omar said.

The Prime Minister is expected to have a busy programme starting with co-chairing a dialogue session entitled "Mobilisation of Financial & Human Resources" with Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni on August 20th. He is also scheduled to attend the signing ceremony of the Smart News Network International (SNNI) with other Heads of State and Government.

Omar said the launch of SNNI is the outcome of the last SAID forum in Moputo, Mozambique and the LID last year. SNNI is an independent news reporting and media networking aimed at providing independent news from participating countries.

Initially eight countries will participate in the news network including Malaysia. Three local print media - the News Straits Times Group, the Star and Kumpulan Utusan will take part in network with Berita Nasional

Malaysia (BERNAMA) managing the website.

News from participating countries can be surfed at www.snni.org.

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