

01 AUG 2002
LID-Smart Partnership
SMART PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE, NOT JUST A TALK SHOP

By: Mohd Faizal Zakariah

LANGKAWI, Aug 1 (Bernama) -- Proponents of smart partnership dialogues often smart in their eyes when some cynics unfairly suggest that the Global Smart International Dialogues Series have been a "talk shop".

Believers of smart partnerships say that much progress has been achieved since the concept was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad under the spirit of "prosper thy neighbour" in 1995.

But supporters of the smart partnership movement also concede that it will take time to produce results.

Smart partnership is about transformation, not a revolution, said Datuk Dr Ahmed Tasir Lope Pihie, president and chief executive of the Malaysia Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MiGHT).

MiGHT is the co-organiser of the Global 2002 Smart Partnership International Dialogue which begins from today until Saturday. The other co-organiser is the Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management.

Global 2002 incorporates the Langkawi International Dialogue (LID), Southern Africa International Dialogue (SAID) and East Africa International Dialogue (EAID).

Dr Ahmed emphasized that LID, which is held biennially on this resort island, was not a talk shop as proven by the transformation and progress that it had brought about.

"But it takes a bit of time for things to happen as results cannot be achieved instantly," he added.

Dr Ahmed reckoned that the transformation as a result of smart partnership ought to be carried out in an orderly and civilised manner so that what had been endeavoured would last and not be too disruptive to the social, administrative and political structures.

He said MiGHT was itself a smart partnership between the government and the private sector working in synergy, prospecting primarily for business and investment opportunities.

Short term products of smart partnerships are not the measurement of success for the smart partnership dialogues, he said.

Dr Ahmed said MiGHT was more interested in the long term vision, long term partnerships and the rolling effects arising from long term business developments rather than short term ones.

The success or failure of smart partnership should not be generalised as some initiatives could be marred by developments beyond one's control, such as changes in policies brought about changes in leadership.

As a testimony to the fact that smart partnership was working well, Dr Ahmed said more African countries were eager to learn from the approaches that Malaysia had undertaken and implement them subsequently.

Other examples of smart partnership in action were the promotion of the ISO 9002 Caribbean quality management programme, further development of the Caribbean business enterprise initiative through smart partnership, an innovative government-private sector partnership in establishing and managing the Akwa Ibom State University of Technology in Nigeria, building capacity for the tuna fishing industry and developing sustainable villages in South Africa, to name a few.

-- BERNAMA
MFZ SHY SD