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SNNi-Opportunity

SNNi OPPORTUNITY FOR SOUTH NATIONS TO EXCHANGE NEWS

KUALA LUMPUR, July 27 (Bernama) -- The Smart News Network International (SNNi) offers nations of the South the opportunity to exchange news and information about one another in a speedy and cost efficient manner, said Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar today.

"We want to provide an alternative source of information and working relationship where you have the opportunity to report things as they are rather than purely interpretation and perception by a very biased foreign media that does not understand the country," he said.

Speaking to reporters after opening the SNNi Workshop here, he was confident that the initiative would work as there was a lot of interest and synergy.

"There should be no problem. It's just a question of once you have got the momentum, you have to keep up with the momentum. At least we will not be getting entirely what the foreign wires are reporting," he added.

He noted that sometimes reports about Malaysia were quoted from foreign news media.

"Why should it be. It should be from our side. Even if they want to report, you have your side of the story. Then you decide for yourselves what type of judgemental issue that you want to be understood or projected," he added.

In his speech, Syed Hamid said with the establishment of news exchange arrangements such as the SNNi, the participating countries could hope to counter distorted reports emanating from foreign media organisations.

"For a long time the South countries were unable to respond to such a concerted onslaught by the Western media and were practically at their mercy because they controlled all the media institutions as well as the infrastructure for dissemination of news and information," he said.

"At least, the reports of our participating news agencies and newspapers will serve as cross-reference as compared to those from foreign media organisations," he added.

He said Western-based media organisations were more interested in disasters or catastrophes, political or social upheavels that befall developing countries rather than their progress.

Syed Hamid said many countries in Africa had indicated their intention to join the SNNi arrangement.

The SNNi workshop is a 10-day training programme for journalists involved in SNNi to equip them with the soft skills to tap the full potential of Information and Communication Technology.

Thirteen foreign and 12 Malaysian participants are attending the programme organised by the Malaysian National News Agency (Bernama).

The foreign participants were from Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, the Republic of Guinea, South Africa, Ghana, Malawi, Uganda and Laos.

SNNi was jointly launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and President J. Chissano of Mozambique in Kampala, Uganda, on Aug 20 last year.

The initial participating members of SNNi are Daily News of Botswana; Bernama, The New Straits Times and Utusan Malaysia of Malaysia; Mozambique News Agency; Namibia Today of Namibia; Buanews of South Africa; New Vision of Uganda; and The Herald of Zimbabwe.

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MSL AZZ AO