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LID-Museveni  
SMART PARTNERSHIP IS BEST SOLUTION, SAYS UGANDA

By: Mohd Kamel Othman

LANGKAWI, July 31 (Bernama) -- Uganda, which has been politically stable for the last 16 years after civil war had ravaged the country in the 1970s, believes that the smart partnership concept is still the best solution to put its economy on a strong footing.

"Since we went on a smart partnership, our economy has been growing," said Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni in a recent interview with the Smart Partners Living Database of the Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management (CPTM).

The Living Database contains the comments of many key proponents of the smart partnership movement.

Museveni, who has been Uganda's president since 1996, said that it was a win-win situation in smart partnership.

"There are no losers but all winners," said the 57-year-old Museveni, who plucked the idea of smart partnership a few years ago from his South African and Malaysian colleagues.

Museveni, a one-time freedom fighter who studied economics and political science, said, "We are already doing it (smart partnership) in our economic situation without changing the country's philosophy for practical reasons."

The Smart Partnership Dialogue was initiated by Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in 1995.

Uganda, with an area of 241,139 sq km and a population of 23 million, lies between the two arms of the Great Rift Valley in East Africa. It borders Kenya to the east, Sudan to the north, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to the west and Tanzania and Rwanda to the south.

Uganda, which has a long and complex political history, is a member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern African States (COMESA), a grouping of 20 countries with a combined market of over 300 million people.

As a trading bloc, COMESA imports more than US\$17 billion and exports over US\$13 billion worth of goods each year.

Museveni is also of the opinion that smart partnership does not only apply for economic purposes but political as well.

"When Idi Amin's regime was ousted in 1979, there was another civil war for another five years but eventually it ended in 1986.

"We called back many of his (Idi Amin's) people and integrated them. So we were already doing a win-win situation then and along with other (foreign) colleagues we signed the ideology and philosophy of smart partnership," said Museveni.

-- BERNAMA

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