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LID-Mahathir (retirement)

DR M SHOULD REMAIN ACTIVE IN SMART PARTNERSHIP EVEN AFTER RETIREMENT

By: Mohd Arshi Daud

LANGKAWI, July 31 (Bernama) -- Smart partnership participants feel Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad should continue to play an active role in smart partnership dialogues even after he retires as prime minister next year, says Datuk Dr Ahmed Tasir Lope Pihie, president and chief executive of the Malaysia Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MiGHT).

"I'm beginning to get comments and requests from my colleagues here if only Yang Amat Berhormat Dr Mahathir could remain active in the dialogues after his retirement," he told Bernama in an interview.

The calls for Dr Mahathir to continue providing his valuable ideas to the smart partnership dialogues came equally from African and Malaysian smart partners.

Dr Mahathir announced his retirement from all government and party posts at this year's Umno General Assembly in June but he was persuaded by Umno Supreme Council members to stay on until October next year.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Joint Executive Group (JEG) preparatory meeting for the Global 2002 Smart Partnership International Dialogue, here, Dr Ahmed described Dr Mahathir's contributions to the dialogues as "superb, superb, unmatched by others."

JEG is responsible for organising and managing the Global 2002 Smart Partnership International Dialogue. This year's dialogue combines the Langkawi International Dialogue (LID), the South African International Dialogue (SAID) and the East Africa International Dialogue (EAID).

MiGHT and the Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management (CPTM) are co-organisers of LID 2002.

Dr Mahathir, who initiated the first smart partnership dialogue in 1995, is LID 2002's patron.

Stressing that Dr Mahathir's engagement in the dialogues was much needed, Dr Ahmed said, "that is only our wish and it's entirely up to him to decide."

He said it was not uncommon for the dialogues to see former heads of government playing an active role after leaving office.

For instance, he said, former Botswanan president Sir Ketumile Masire had continued to be an active senior participant.

Asked whether LID 2002 participants would make a special proposal for Dr Mahathir to remain active in the dialogues, Dr Ahmed said: "I really can't say. We, the organisers, don't set a certain agenda or a pre-determined decision, so to speak. It's completely up to the participants."

-- BERNAMA

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