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LID-Progress (Wrap-up)

LID HELPS DEVELOPING NATIONS BETTER UNDERSTAND GLOBAL ISSUES

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LANGKAWI, Aug 4 (Bernama) -- At the end of the three-day Global 2002 Langkawi International Dialogue (LID) yesterday, no official communique or statement was issued. But it was not usual for statements to be issued at the end of such deliberations. Instead, the leaders, after having discussed various reports prepared by key interest groups or links, spoke on the progress of the smart partnership movement and how it has helped them understand global issues better.

This is because the essence of such gatherings was consensus among the participants, including the leaders, on the issues at hand in an atmosphere of informality.

Chief among the issues where agreement was struck was on economic terrorism, a concern highlighted by Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. Here the participants, including the leaders, felt that developing countries ought to be united and speak with one voice when confronting stronger and richer nations of the industrialised West on the issue of globalisation.

Consensus on that was achieved in the spirit of cooperation through smart partnering.

And there appears to be some light at the end of the tunnel as far as how developing countries can move the smart partnership process forward when Ghanaian President John A. Kufour said their cohesive stand can make the strong and the rich behave in a more responsible manner towards the poor and the weak.

With their united stand through smart networking, he felt that countries which are currently poor and weak can still have a niche in globalisation because they will not be alone. Otherwise, they will have great fear when moving into the unknown world of globalisation.

With the realisation that developing countries can be a force to be reckoned with, Global 2002 LID participants felt that they should cooperate and share information prior to negotiations on international issues such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting.

Even without official pieces of paper or documents, it cannot be denied that Global 2002 LID had made much tangible progress on a number of areas.

For instance, Dr Mahathir said the sharing of experiences was exceptionally invaluable, particularly on national governance and administration, because there was no school for prime ministers and presidents or would-be prime ministers and presidents.

The First Ladies, who came along with their husbands, also had a fruitful meeting when they agreed to compile songs sung by them in a compact disc to raise funds for those affected by drought in Africa.

As for the Smart News Network International (SNNi), a news exchange among media organisations in Malaysia, Mozambique, Lesotho, South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia, its membership will be expanded soon as a news organisation from Ghana, Graphic Communication, is keen to join.

Malaysia's offer to have the Labuan Financial Exchange as a "surrogate exchange" for African companies keen on tapping funds from the capital market has begun to attract interest, especially from Uganda.

Although business deals were not publicly announced, it is believed that many negotiations had been held between the private sector members.

In fact, one Lesotho businessman is delaying his departure so that he

can have a first-hand look at the Multimedia Super Corridor and hold talks with Malaysian officials on cooperation in multimedia education.

These are just a few examples of the "win-win" concept in action at Global 2002 LID. And there certainly are many more given that the networking process had enabled many government officials and businessmen to move the smart partnership forward by understanding issues as well as one another better.

-- BERNAMA

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