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Towards enhancing partnerships among developing countries

reports on "Global 2002 - International Smart Partnership Dialogue" by LEADERS began arriving at the legendary island of Langkawi yesterday ahead of today's Global 2002 International Smart Partnership Dialogue, a brainstorming session to enhance partnerships among countries of the developing world.

The Global 2002, which will be held at the Pelangi Beach Resort in Pantai Chenang, incorporates the Langkawi International Dialogue, the Southern Africa International Dialogue and for the first time this year, the East Africa International Dialogue.

The enlarged four-day Dialogue themed Enhancing Global Security and Prosperity Through Smart Partnership, will also for the first time include security issues, given the travails of the Sept 11 terrorism attacks on the United States.

The 18 heads of State and Government or their representatives generally agree that the magnitude of the Sept 11 attacks and their disastrous after-effects drew the entire world into strife, conflict and economic distress.

They believe that the antidote can only be found in constructive engagement, upon which Smart Partnership was built.

Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MiGHT) Adviser Tan Sri Dr Omar Abdul Rahman said this year's Dialogue would not only deliberate on security issues but also delve into economic security matters.

"The topics we have chosen are linked to security but not in the physical aspect but in terms of economic interest. We are going to look into how developing countries are going to handle new and emerging challenges in safeguarding their economic security," he said.

Officials said the leaders would revisit the basics of the Smart Partnership framework as it has brought benefits to those who have been willing to discuss, debate and exchange, and through clarification of perceptions, has built a greater commonality for all to share.

Smart Partnership is propelled by the adage "Prosper thy Neighbour" pursued by Malaysia under the Mahathir administration, a direct antithesis of the win-lose situation and its consequence of "beggar thy neighbour".

Smart Partnership is about limit-less opportunities and wealth that is shared, sustainable and allows the participants to function in the global economy.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will deliver a keynote address at the opening banquet today to set the tone for the Dialogue whose objectives will be to:

- * Continue to foster Smart Partnership principles across nations, nationalities, governments, business and social sectors;
- * Share experiences and lessons learned in governmental, economic and socio-political areas;
- * Explore the utilisation of resources that would benefit and enhance the well-being of the Smart Partnership international community;
- * Provide an avenue for the specialised link group members to network, share and consult each other on issues, opportunities and challenges confronting them, and;
- * Facilitate the collaboration and integration of the regionally dispersed Hubs and Webs such that an open global citizenship is created.

On the issue of finance and economy, Malaysia would propose using the

Labuan International Financial Exchange (LFX) as a "surrogate exchange" for certain developing countries to facilitate or accelerate the development of their own capital markets.

The programme for this year's Dialogue has been modified to reflect the growth and dynamism of the Smart Partnership movement. The need to include the younger generation in the Smart Partners community was verbalised in Langkawi in 1999, thus Club 29 was born to provide a special identity to the next generation.

This year's Dialogue promises to see significant participation from young entrepreneurs, technopreneurs and professionals who are expected to continue the Smart Partnership concept in future.

Some 400 participants will be involved in the Dialogue.