

# Swaziland invite for Malaysians

STAR 13 AUG 2003

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SWAZILAND

MALAYSIAN businessmen are invited to invest in Swaziland to take advantage of the various subsidies and tax incentives it provides, said Economic Planning and Development Minister, Prince Guduza.

He told Malaysian journalists covering the Smart Partnership Global 2003 international dialogue, starting today, that Malaysian businessmen could use Swaziland as a gateway to the southern African region as his country was a member of the South African Custom Union and the Southern African Development Community.

Cuduza also said Malaysians could capitalise on the United States' African Growth and Opportunity Act that gave certain products made in Swaziland preferential treatment in the US market.

He said a new international airport, costing RM150mil and capable of accommodating all types of aircraft, was being built.

Cuduza said he hoped Malaysians could help develop Swaziland's small- and medium-enterprises, providing new technology, which they were good at.

On the Global 2003, Guduza said he was happy to note that the dialogue hosted by Swaziland was not government-driven, but promoted by the Swazi people as seen in the case of a 10-year-old boy, who pledged five chickens to the organisers.

To a question, he described as misguided the criticism levelled against the government for buying a marquee costing US\$1mil (RM3.8mil) from a company registered in Malaysia, but a subsidiary of a Singapore-based firm.

He said the tent made with German technology was needed to host domestic and international events.

To a question if the dialogue had brought together leaders of conflicting countries in the region, who would not otherwise have met, Guduza said the event was an opportunity to resolve the regional conflict.

He said former Botswana President Ketimule Masire who would attend could employ the tools of this dialogue in the peace talks.

On AIDS, Guduza said King Mswati III had launched a CD album to raise funds to fight the pandemic in Swaziland, as well as formed an independent body to coordinate international efforts in combating the disease.

(AIDS affects one in four Swazis in this small country of 1.2 million people and, according to the UNDP human development report 2003, life expectancy here in 2005 will be 28 years as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.)

Today, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his entourage arrive at the newly renovated Matsapha International Airport, and met by Swaziland Prime Minister Dr Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini and joint dialogue convenors Prince Guduza and CPTM chief executive Datuk Dr Mihaela Y Smith.

He was driven to the newly-built Ezulwini VIP guest house village, where heads of state/government will be staying.

The state dinner welcoming the heads of state/government and 600 delegates will be held at the dialogue marquee, where King Mswati III will give his welcoming remarks, and Dr Mahathir to deliver his keynote address on enhancing identity and progress through smart partnership.