

Mahathir a hero of developing world, says official

MBABANE (Swaziland): Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has been described as a hero of the developing world at the Smart Partnership Global 2003 International Dialogue village even before his arrival here.

He received the accolade from former Commonwealth secretary-general Sir Shridath Ramphal after he was introduced to officials at a preparatory meeting at the dialogue village.

“Hero of the Developing World in the person of Dr Mahathir” was how Ramphal commended Dr Mahathir.

“He has spoken with passion and credibility and he has first-hand experience of globalisation, which is from knowledge and insight into issues,” he said.

Ramphal, Sri Lanka’s former Foreign Minister, is here to take part in the first session themed “Enhancing Global Co-operative Security Through Smart Partnership Dialogues” scheduled for today.

This dialogue will have special meaning for Dr Mahathir as a session for tribute to his key role in the smart partnership movement has been arranged by the King of Swaziland King Mswati III for the final day.

A book on Dr Mahathir’s thoughts on Malaysia-Africa partnership will also be launched.

South African President Thabo Mbeki will make his first official visit to Malaysia on Sept 2.

Malaysian High Commissioner in South Africa Datuk Zainal Azman Zainal Abidin told Malaysian journalists covering the dialogue that the visit was significant for both countries as South Africa was the biggest market among Southern African countries for local products and investments.