

30 JUL 2004
LID-Roundup
GLOBAL 2004 LID OPENS IN BUSINESS-LIKE MANNER

by Mikhail Raj Abdullah

LANGKAWI, July 29 (Bernama) -- The Global 2004 Langkawi International Dialogue got underway Thursday in a friendly and business-like manner with Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi also taking on the role as the country's "Number One Salesman" by impressing upon the foreign participants on the many attributes of local goods and services exhibited at an industrial showcase here.

The showcase was a new feature of the LID aimed at fostering better smart partnerships among the corporate sectors of the participating countries.

Earlier, the Prime Minister, together with the leaders, went on a walkabout after the Arts and Culture Gallery was launched amid the enthralling sounds of traditional Lesotho music from an accordion player.

At the welcoming dinner on Thursday night, Abdullah made a strong stand by calling on rich nations and Western governments to demonstrate greater responsibility in helping to uplift the living conditions of impoverished communities, including Muslim societies.

In a serious and hard-hitting speech, he said poverty and deprivation as well as other injustices could lead to terrorist activities, and this was why it was crucial to create a safer and more equitable world.

Abdullah warned that "the world cannot afford a global economic divide along religious-cultural fault lines and suggested that wealthier countries should help without any conditions while recipient countries should ensure proper governance and transparency.

Abdullah's commitment to the Smart Partnership movement was accorded rightful recognition when King Mswati III of Swaziland made a surprise announcement that the Malaysian leader had agreed to become a Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management (CPTM) Fellow. The role of a

CPTM

fellow, among others, is to provide strategic directions to the body and its smart partnership philosophy.

Abdullah will lead the dialogue session Friday on poverty, development and security, together with co-moderator Dr Sam Nujoma, the Namibian president.

The first day of the LID was also an opportune time for the participants to express gratitude to Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad for being the prime mover of the LID in 1995 and which subsequently spawned similar dialogues in Southern and East Africa.

Dr Mahathir said when LID was first held in 1995, he thought that it would be a one-off affair.

But, fortunately, the participants found the smart partnership dialogue to be useful as it enabled them to understand each other better and this led the dialogue to be held once a year or once every two years since then, he recalled.

Dr Mahathir said he was also pleased that his successor, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, was committed towards the LID and thanked him for it.

Abdullah said that with the LID having been in existence for about 10 years, he expected dialogue participants to offer suggestions on what needed to be done for the next 10 years to help developing countries.

Former President Sir Ketumile Masire of Botswana praised Malaysia's leadership in helping developing countries.

"We need fear no evil for you will always be with us. We have been very favourably impressed by the way Malaysia has been providing leadership (to other developing countries)," he said.

Stressing on this point, he said: "I think we need Malaysia more than Malaysia needs us. You have put in more than perhaps all of us put together (in terms of advancing the interests of the South)."

Malaysia's former first lady, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, was also honoured when she received the Companion Award from the Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management (CPTM).

In a citation read out by Sir Ketumile, Siti Hasmah was

described as
having set an example in personal and professional achievement for
women in
Malaysia.

The LID would enter its second day Friday with 700 participants
from 33
countries brainstorming on issues ranging from engagement, trust and
security, poverty development and human relations.

Other topics include bridging the gap between business
priorities and
poverty challenges, the threat of new and existing diseases, small
economies, co-operatives and hubs and innovation and science advice
as well
as leadership and training.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Tun Razak is also to
present a hands-on experience on the successful re-engineering of
the
Federal Land Development Authority (Felda) and how land development
schemes
had helped to overcome poverty.

The three-day LID ends Saturday when a Langkawi statement is
expected
to be issued on ways to move forward the Smart Partnership movement
premised on the "prosper-thy-neighbour" policy.

-- BERNAMA

MR SHY