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LID-Leaders

NAMIBIA'S NUJOMA CALLS FOR AFRO-ASIAN UNITY AHEAD OF GLOBAL 2004 LID

By: Muin Abdul Majid

LANGKAWI, July 28 (Bernama) -- Namibian President Dr Sam Nujoma has called for the strengthening of Afro-Asian unity to keep "the exploiters of this world" at bay as he and other leaders arrived here today for the Global 2004 Langkawi International Dialogue (LID) which begins tomorrow.

He said the exploitation of resources in developing countries should instead benefit the local populace and not creating wealth for others.

"It is very important for us to concentrate on Afro-Asian solidarity and the strengthening of the movement of the Non-Aligned countries to ensure that our resources are not exploited by the exploiters of this world," he told Bernama and official broadcaster RTM on arrival at the Langkawi International Airport.

The three-day dialogue, themed "Towards a Smarter Globe-Reconciling Development Challenges with Global Security Through Dialogue", will be opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi tomorrow.

Dr Nujoma said co-operation between the developing countries of the South and their richer relations of the North must be premised on the genuine recognition of sovereignty of the developing countries.

The Namibian leader said commerce and trade linkages between both sides must also be based on mutual benefit for all the parties involved.

"No exploitation of men by men should be allowed," said the LID veteran who has led Namibia, a nation of 1.95 million, since March 1990.

Dr Nujoma said developing countries, including those involved in the Smart Partnership movement, must find ways to manufacture products with the aim of exporting them to reinforce their economic strengths.

He also paid tribute to former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who initiated the LID in 1995, for having left a strong impression among

developing countries.

The LID is an integral part of the International Dialogue on Smart Partnership series, which includes the Southern Africa International Dialogue (SAID) and the Eastern Africa International Dialogue (EAID).

Among those who arrived today were King Mswati III of Swaziland, whose country hosted the Global 2003 dialogue in Ezulwini, South African Vice President Jacob G. Zuma and President Joaquim Alberto Chissano of Mozambique.

Zuma also spoke his mind at the airport about what he described as the two big issues that faced the world today -- globalisation and poverty.

"While the world is (being) developed, it doesn't seem to be addressing the problems of the poorest of the poor," he said, adding that governments and the private sector should take up the challenge of tackling those problems.

Zuma said after going through a lot of difficulties, the African continent was taking the bull by its horns this time around by establishing the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).

"We believe the world must interact with it in order to help Africa move along the path of fighting poverty and other problems of under-development," he said, adding that he believed that other African nations attending the Langkawi talks would also speak along similar lines.

The host patron of Global 2003, King Mswati, said he hoped to touch on the subject of how small economies could co-operate with countries having bigger economies at the dialogue in Langkawi, a resort island which has become one of Malaysia's top tourist havens.

Based on his meeting recently with Abdullah at Putrajaya in the run-up to Global 2004 LID, the monarch said he saw that Abdullah was very much committed to moving the Smart Partnership movement forward.

-- BERNAMA

MAM SHY