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Dialogue-Leadership

MAHATHIR'S LEADERSHIP WINS PRAISE AT LANGKAWI DIALOGUE

LANGKAWI, July 30 (Bernama) -- Participants at the Langkawi International Dialogue today praised Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his strong political leadership in a world which they say is increasingly lacking in one.

They said political leaders of Dr Mahathir's qualities and vision were rare in both developed and developing countries, and Malaysia's own track record in nation-building could be a model for other countries.

His leadership came in for special mention by spokesmen of the 250 participants, comprising mostly senior government officials and captains of industry during the second day of the dialogue at the Langkawi Berjaya Beach Resort.

Professor Bertrand Schneider, the secretary-general of the Club of Rome, an international think tank, said the world is suffering from a lack of political leadership.

He said he could not think of a better example of strong political leadership as the one provided by Dr Mahathir and Malaysia's success is proof of this.

"In many countries, what is lacking is the kind of leadership which we obviously see in Malaysia and the success of Malaysia today is due to Dr Mahathir's leadership," he said.

"That is the reason why the situation in so many countries is so bad."

For their sessions during the LID, the participants are seated in 25 round tables in groups of 10. The spokesman for each group presents the views of the group on issues on the agenda which focus on ways of forging smart partnership as a new concept of doing business.

Smart partnership means forging a business relationship to achieve a long term win-win situation.

Also participating in the LID are four foreign heads of

government --

President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, President Sam Nujoma of Namibia, President Sir Ketumile Masire of Botswana and Cambodian First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh. Dr Mahathir will close the three-day dialogue tomorrow.

Professor Henry Dzinotyiweyi of Zimbabwe, speaking for his group, said as someone coming from the southern African region, he knew only too well what political instability arising from lack of strong political leadership meant.

"We in Africa know what this is all about," he said.

Darwis Daek, the general manager of Malaysian Industrial Development Finance (MIDF), said it was a consensus among his group members that Dr Mahathir is a strong leader, very knowledgeable, a hard taskmaster on government officials as well as the businessmen.

"He is a hard taskmaster on others but he is even harder upon himself," he said.

Dr Janet Morgan of Cable & Wireless of the United Kingdom attributed Malaysia's success to the heavy investment it is making in education.

"Twenty years ago, such a heavy investment in education might have raised eyebrows but today it is paying off," she said.

Other spokesmen, in articulating the concept of smart partnership, called on governments to withdraw from areas in which they do not perform efficiently.

According to them, the functions of government are mainly as a facilitator and the lesser government interference the better it would be for smart partnerships to succeed. -- BERNAMA

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