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All set to lead the way with five programmes

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LANGKAWI: At least five specific programmes of action are ready to be implemented by the Langkawi International Dialogue (LID) 2007 partner countries, including initiating schemes to develop human capital at pre-school level.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the other programmes were:

- Promotion of entrepreneurship and small-business activities in partner countries;
- Setting up small credit financing instruments;
- Setting up programmes for capacity building and skills training; and,
- Developing relationships with the private sector to ensure skills provided would be relevant to market needs.

He said the most important thing for LID 2007 was to come out with a document, called "The Way Forward", recording the experiences of all countries and finding solutions to problems, particularly in poverty eradication. The five programmes are expected to be included in the document.

"If we are in a position to help any country, we will help. That's the way relationships are built," he said after chairing the LID sessions here yesterday.

Abdullah also explained that if a lot of money was asked for, Malaysia would have to decline the request, although it would not

mind some form of credit financing to alleviate poverty.

Participants, including leaders of southern and eastern African nations who deliberated on specific issues and policies yesterday, agreed on the need for an effective delivery system.

They also agreed that governments' role in providing employment should not be confined to creating jobs but should include programmes for self-employment.

The LID leaders agreed that seed capital and other funds for small businesses should be given priority in their respective countries.

On bilateral meetings, the prime minister said his discussions with Sudanese President Omar Hassan on Sunday focused on the situation in Darfur.

Malaysia was still considering the possibility of sending troops to join a United Nations peacekeeping force for the region, Abdullah said, adding that Omar expressed his gratitude to Malaysia for its willingness to assist the country.

"I mentioned to him my proposal to have the displaced people of Darfur returned to their villages, and also the need to build houses and provide food, medicine and education for them," he said.

Abdullah also met Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni yesterday, who was hoping for the prime minister's attendance at November's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi hits the gong to start the first session of the LID 2007 at the Berjaya Langkawi Beach and Spa Resort yesterday.

(CHOGM) in Kampala.

On his meeting with Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe on Sunday, the prime minister said there were no specific matters discussed, except for continued relations.

It is understood that during the meeting, Mugabe had asked

Malaysia for help in trade and investment.

Asked yesterday, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said Malaysia realised Zimbabwe's economic and political problems but that "we don't want any country to be condemned to death. People will suffer".