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# PM and Dr M share more than just dialogue

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**LANGKAWI:** It was certainly heartening to see Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's warmth shining through the entire proceedings of the just-concluded Langkawi International Dialogue (LID).

Even more touching was the warmth that radiated between Abdullah and former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad from day one of the LID.

For Dr Mahathir, it must have been comforting to see his successor, Abdullah, soldiering on with the ideals of the "smart partnership" dialogue.

Abdullah's felicitations to Dr Mahathir and Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali on their 51st wedding anniversary surprised the couple, who deeply appreciated Abdullah's thoughtful gesture at the opening of the 2007 LID.

When asked about the prime minister's good wishes, Dr Mahathir said he was grateful.

"*Terima kasihlah, saya tak sangka dia tahu* (Thank you, I didn't expect him to know)," he said.

For Dr Mahathir, he too was magnanimous in his remarks before the start of the dialogue when he said Abdullah had chosen an appropriate theme for LID 2007 — "Poverty Eradication through Human Capital Development and Capacity Building".

Abdullah was also gracious in handing over his turn to Dr Mahathir after he was invited by Swaziland's King Mswati III to speak on the last day.

Abdullah's respectful gesture not only caught delegates by surprise, but also had the press training their focus on Dr Mahathir.

The two later walked together to lunch.

On Monday afternoon, the prime minister's wife, Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah, had a private chat with Dr Siti Hasmah.

Both Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah actively participated in most of the sessions, demonstrat-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (right) walking side by side with his predecessor, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad (left), on their way to The Beach Restaurant for lunch on Tuesday. — Bernama picture

ing their lasting commitment to the "smart partnership" movement of the dialogue, which has been espoused by the former prime minister since 1995.

Upon arrival for the closing dinner on Tuesday night, Abdullah, together with Jeanne, walked up to Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah to exchange pleasantries.

The wives also hugged and kissed each other.

It was evident to all that the

couples were comfortable with one another as they joined other participants in enjoying themselves in the finale of what was surely another fruitful and successful LID.

The sight of so many leaders and heads of state converging on Langkawi must have done Dr Mahathir proud, seeing the island — which was once a far-flung quarantine centre for TB patients when he was posted there in 1956 as a young doctor — play

host to an important international conference.

At the end of it all, Abdullah won the hearts of many with his gentlemanly warmth and charm while conducting the proceedings in his amiable and yet business-like manner.

Abdullah certainly lives up to the ideals of one of the many quotations on leadership: "Leadership is based on inspiration, not domination, on co-operation, not intimidation." — Bernama