

**Najib To Further Promote Malaysia-Africa Ties, Trade  
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From Jamaluddin Muhammad**

DAR ES SALAAM (TANZANIA), June 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak is expected to further promote Malaysia-Africa ties, investment and trade when he arrives for the Global Smart Partnership Dialogue, here, tomorrow.

Najib will be leading an over 100-member Malaysian delegation including Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Idris Jala and Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa and former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Najib will also be accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, apart from a business delegation comprising captains of industry from 28 Malaysian companies.

The premier is scheduled to arrive at the Julius Nyerere International Airport, here, at 10pm tomorrow (Malaysian time: 3am, June 29).

Malaysian High Commissioner to Kenya, Ismail Salam, who is also the Malaysian High Commissioner designate to Tanzania, said Najib would be joining 14 other heads of state/government from African countries at the dialogue to be held at the Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre, here, named after Tanzania's founding father, on Saturday.

With the dialogue's theme of "Leveraging Technology for Africa's Socio-Economic Transformation", Najib is expected to share his transformation programmes to turn Malaysia into a high-income and developed nation by 2020 with the participants, on Saturday and Sunday.

"Malaysia's presence during the dialogue will show our commitment to addressing international issues, especially issues that are of importance to the African continent," said Ismail.

He said Malaysia would also showcase its technology, products and services in the agriculture, ICT and energy sectors in an exhibition on the sidelines of the dialogue, at the same venue.

Among the items and sectors to be promoted are seedlings, tissue culture, biofertilisers, biopesticides, plantlets, animal husbandry, solid waste management, insurance and takaful software, security software, smart card, smart school, power generation, oil and gas services, halal cleaning services, tertiary education, palm oil, chemicals, machinery and building materials.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to be one of the catalysers for the Dialogue Session on Leveraging Technology for Smart Growth in Socio-Economic Transformation.

"The African countries have high regard for Malaysia when it comes to development, as Malaysia's per capita income has reached about US\$10,000 while their per capita income is still around US\$1,500 although they gained independence at almost the same time as Malaysia did.

"They hope this region's development could leapfrog with some technological advancement," said Ismail.

The Global Smart Partnership Dialogue was launched in 1995 when Malaysia hosted the first Langkawi International Dialogue (LID). The dialogue serves as a platform for smart partners including heads of government, business leaders, scientists and academicians to meet and discuss ideas and experiences related to Science, Technology and Innovation.

In the last 18 years, the hosting of the dialogue alternated between Malaysia and countries in Africa with the dialogue in Africa last convened in Uganda in 2009 and the last LID held in Putrajaya in 2011.

Asked on the relatively small investment made by Malaysian companies in the African region despite the close Malaysia-Africa rapport in the last 18 years, Ismail said generally, Malaysian businessmen were quite reluctant to enter the African market which was far away and not really open, and also because of the lack of clear business policies and transparency.

Asked why countries like China, India, Brazil and Japan dared to invest billions of dollars despite such a scenario, Ismail said they had big financial back-up by their investment banks.

China has invested US\$160 billion, India (US\$60 billion), Japan (US\$32 billion) and Brazil (US\$30 billion) in African countries while the investment figure for Malaysia in this region was not available, but small.

"The government can only facilitate their investment and trade but they are the ones that must come and take the initiative," Ismail said.

However, he said, there was remarkable improvement of trade between Malaysia and three eastern African countries, namely Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya, with trade with Uganda doubled and with Kenya seeing an increase of 20 to 30 per cent last year.

Ismail said Malaysian investment banks could play a more active role in facilitating trade and investment by Malaysian companies in this region.

He said education, tourism and agriculture were sectors that Malaysian investors could venture into, including through partnership.

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