

MAHATHIR - ISLAM

83 (P)  
KUALA LUMPUR, JUNE 2 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY URGED MUSLIMS TO IMPROVE THEIR STATE OF WELL-BEING AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE WELL-BEING OF THE WHOLE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY BY ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY AND USING THEM FOR THEIR BETTERMENT.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID AFTER CENTURIES OF BACKWARDNESS AND DEPENDENCE IT WAS TIME THAT MUSLIMS HARNESSSED THEIR SKILLS AND EXPERTISE AS THE PROGRESS OF MANKIND AS A WHOLE COULD NOT DEPEND ON JUST A SEGMENT OF THE WORLD -- THE SO-CALLED DEVELOPED WORLD.

"IF THE WORLD IS TO ACHIEVE A BETTER STATE OF WELL-BEING, EVERYONE HAS TO PLAY HIS ROLE, MUSLIMS IRRESPECTIVE," HE SAID WHEN OPENING THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON "ISLAMIC APPROACH TOWARDS TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT" IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA HERE.

HE REGRETTED THAT TODAY MUSLIMS WERE A DEPRIVED GROUP, GENERALLY LACKING IN RESOURCES AND CAPABILITY, AND THEIR IMAGE WAS NOT THAT OF A PEOPLE WHO WERE STRONG IN FAITH, PROGRESSIVE, UNITED, TOLERANT AND KNOWLEDGEABLE.

HE ADMITTED THAT NO DOUBT THE ORIENTALISTS HAD TO SOME EXTENT PAINTED A WRONG PICTURE OF ISLAM AND MUSLIMS, BUT MUSLIMS THEMSELVES, IN THEIR ORIENTATION AND CONDUCT, HAD NOT DONE MUCH TO ERASE THIS TARNISHED IMAGE. -- MORE 1100/MB

MAHATHIR - ISLAM 2 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THE FACT THAT A THIRD OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION WERE MUSLIMS AND THAT THEY INHABIT THE LESS-DEVELOPED PARTS OF THE WORLD TODAY SHOWED HOW MUCH MUSLIMS WERE DEPENDENT ON THE OTHERS FOR THEIR WELL-BEING.

"THE IMAGE OF THE MUSLIMS TODAY COMPARED TO THE PERIOD OFN EXCELLENCE DURING AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TIME OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD IS MOST DISTRESSING. THIS IS FAR FROM WHAT ISLAM PROMISES AND EXPECTS OF US, AND IT IS OF OUR OWN MAKING," HE ADDED.

HE SAID TODAY MUSLIMS COULD ONLY BE PROUD OF THE PAST -- THE RELICS OF ISLAMIC CIVILISATION AT ITS PEAK.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR BELIEVED THAT ALTHOUGH MUSLIMS WERE A DEPRIVED GROUP, THERE WERE MUSLIM COUNTRIES WHICH WERE ENDOWED WITH RESOURCES AND THERE WERE ALSO MUSLIMS WITH SKILLS AND EXPERTISE.

WHAT WAS WANTING WAS A COOPERATIVE EFFORT TO SEE TO THE UTILISATION OF THESE RESOURCES FOR THE COMMON GOOD. -- MORE 1108/MB

ZCZC ND10 (F/S)

MAHATHIR - ISLAM 3 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MADE IT CLEAR THAT EVERY MINUTE OF INDIFFERENCE ON THE PART OF MUSLIMS TO CHANGING TECHNOLOGY MIGHT MEAN DECADES OF EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE PARITY.

"AS MUSLIMS WE MUST BE CONCERNED WITH OUR WAY OF LIFE. INDIFFERENCE AND REJECTION CANNOT HELP IN MAKING US BETTER MUSLIMS BUT ON THE OTHER HAND IT WILL MAKE US MORE DEPENDENT ON AND INFLUENCED BY OTHERS," HE ADDED.

HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT ONLY BY BEING INVOLVED IN THE QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE AND IN DEVELOPING THE NECESSARY TECHNOLOGY FOR THE MUSLIMS' BENEFIT COULD THEY SURVIVE THIS AGE OF RAPID CHANGE AND CHALLENGES.

"I DO NOT CLAIM TO BE AN EXPERT ON TECHNOLOGY, BUT WHAT I HAVE SEEN HAS MADE ME MORE CONFIDENT THAT FOR MUSLIMS TO BE EFFECTIVE PARTNERS IN THE MODERN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, AND TO BE OF SERVICE TO MANKIND, WE MUST STRENGTHEN OUR RESOLVE TO ACQUIRE THE NECESSARY KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY IN KEEPING WITH THE TIMES," THE PRIME MINISTER ADDED.

HE SAID MUCH OF THE RESPONSIBILITY LAY WITH THE MUSLIM SCHOLARS AND PRACTITIONERS, IN INSTILLING AMONG MUSLIMS THE RIGHT SPIRIT AND ATTITUDE THAT COULD HELP THEM CATCH UP WITH THE OTHERS IN THE FIELD OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY. -- MORE 1115/MB

ZCZC ND11 (F/S)

MAHATHIR - ISLAM 4 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR URGED MALAYSIAN MUSLIMS IN PARTICULAR NOT TO BE INDIFFERENT TO THE RAPID TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES AS THE NATION'S RESOURCES COULD NOT LAST FOREVER UNLESS THEY DEVELOPED THEIR CAPABILITY, TECHNOLOGY AND KNOW-HOW IN ADDITION TO EXPLORING NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE.

+OTHERS WILL NOT HELP US FOREVER. OTHERS WILL NOT HELP WHEN WE MOST NEED HELP. WE CAN ONLY DEPEND ON OURSELVES,+ HE STRESSED.

THE PRIME MINISTER CAUTIONED THAT IN A WORLD THAT WAS SHAPED BY TECHNOLOGY, THE MUSLIMS' REJECTION OF IT COULD ONLY LEAD TO CONTINUING WEAKNESS AND TO POSSIBLE EXTINCTION.

HE SAID ALREADY SOME MUSLIMS HAD LOST FAITH AND HAD REJECTED ISLAM BECAUSE OF THE MUSLIMS' POVERTY IN TECHNOLOGY AND THE ACHIEVEMENTS THAT WERE ASSOCIATED WITH IT.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR NOTED THAT UNTIL QUITE RECENTLY, DEVELOPMENT HAD BEEN CONSTRUED AS BEING INCOMPATIBLE WITH RELIGION, IN PARTICULAR ISLAM, AS ISLAM WAS VIEWED AS AN OBSTACLE TO DEVELOPMENT. - MORE 1120/BW

MAHATHIR - ISLAM 5 KUALA LUMPUR

EVEN TODAY, HE ADDED, THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO STILL BELIEVED THAT RELIGIOUS VALUES CONSTITUTED A MAJOR OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS.

HE WAS HOWEVER HAPPY THAT THIS VIEW HAD BEEN REPLACED SLOWLY BY A MORE POSITIVE STANCE IN ACADEMIC CIRCLES, BUT THERE WERE MUSLIMS WHO STILL REJECTED PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT AS NOT IN CONSONANCE WITH ISLAM.

THIS WAS MOST UNFORTUNATE SINCE MUSLIMS CONSTITUTED ABOUT A BILLION OR THE WORLD'S POPULATION AND ISLAM DID SUBSCRIBE TO PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR STRESSED THAT WHILE ISLAM PLACED IMPORTANCE ON THE HEREAFTER, IT DID NOT PREACH THE REJECTION OF THIS WORLD BUT IN FACT MADE THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE OBLIGATORY ON ALL MUSLIMS AND ISLAM ALSO REQUIRED ITS FOLLOWERS TO WORK AND DO GOOD.

+ONLY IGNORANCE OF THE TOTAL PHILOSOPHY AND TEACHING OF ISLAM MAKES ONE BELIEVE THAT ISLAM IS OPPOSED TO DEVELOPMENT. IT IS TRUE THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS BAD, AND IN SOME CASES THEY ARE NOT ONLY NOT IN LINE WITH ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES, BUT ALSO SOCIALLY UNDESIRABLE,+ HE ADDED. - MORE 1137/BW

ZCZC NO13 (F/S)

MAHATHIR - ISLAM 6 KUALA LUMPUR

HE STRESSED THAT ISLAM AND PROGRESS, WITHIN THE PERIMETERS PERMITTED BY ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES, COULD NEVER BE INCOMPATIBLE.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR REGRETTED THAT EVEN THOUGH KNOWLEDGE COULD HELP STRENGTHEN THE MUSLIMS' FAITH AND IMPROVE THEIR WELL-BEING THERE WERE INDIVIDUALS WHO PREACHED THE IRRELEVENCE OF KNOWLEDGE AND PROGRESS TO MUSLIMS.

THOUGH THERE WERE BRANCHES OF KNOWLEDGE INCLUDING ASTRONOMY, BIOLOGY, AND ENGINEERING WHICH DID NOT NECESSARILY LEAD MUSLIMS TO DIVINE TRUTH, MUSLIMS COULD NOT REJECT THEM AS LONG AS THEY COULD SERVE TO IMPROVE THEIR WELL-BEING.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID KNOWLEDGE WAS SUBJECTIVE - IT SHOULD BE IN SUPPORT OF THE QUEST FOR DIVINE TRUTH AND TO SERVE THE GOOD OF MANKIND.

ABOUT 200 PARTICIPANTS ARE ATTENDING THE FOUR-DAY CONFERENCE. - BERNAMA 1140/BW