

# Cut down on the debates, Mahathir tells OIC members

PETALING JAYA: The Organisation of Islamic Conference should spend less time talking, be more active and less inward-looking, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said the 50-member OIC could not afford to disagree with each other if the organisation wanted to be strong.

He said if the OIC continued to be inward-looking, it would only channel its energy to resolving internal problems.

Too much time had also been spent on debating during OIC meetings, he told delegates attending the 7th International Conference of the World Assembly of Muslim Youths here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said an active and united OIC, working within the framework of the United Nations, would be ideal.

"We should be with the United Nations. We cannot operate outside the UN because we are weak," he said.

At the hour-long dialogue, Dr Mahathir was asked questions on Muslim unity, the UN Security Council, the OIC, the situation in Cambodia and topics on the environment and development.

Dr Mahathir said some Muslim countries talked about sending soldiers to Bosnia-Herzegovina but they did not even have the capability to produce weapons and had to buy them from developed countries.

"We must at least speak with one voice. There are many issues that our views do not differ," he added.

He said Muslims tended to divert their attention to polemics and long discussions on issues that could not be concluded.

"This has been going on for years, even centuries. We let trivial matters interfere with the application of realities," he said.

Many delegates who took part in the dialogue praised Dr Mahathir for his bold views.