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Dollah: We're willing to help other nations

Jailani Harun in Istanbul

ISTANBUL, Fri: Malaysia is not selfish. It will share with other countries the experience and knowledge in areas it is already well-established, says Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

He said Malaysia is more than willing to offer assistance to any government seeking expertise on several development-related projects which include privatization, banking, poverty-eradication programme and public funds management.

"We believe that Malaysia can contribute significantly to the success of such relations," he told Malaysian journalists at a press conference ahead of the 12-15 inaugural summit meeting of the Developing-8 (D-8) here today.

He was reacting to questions on Malaysia's role to foster a stronger economic bonding among members of the new grouping within the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

Malaysia, he added, can be flexible in attending to requests made by other countries which sought its assistance in these areas.

"As we are quite successful in our national development, we are willing to share the experience with others.

"We are not selfish," he said.

He added that Malaysia is also willing to incorporate the idea of Malaysia Inc and Smart Partnership into the D-8 cooperation structure.

On the D-8 which is scheduled to be officially formed on Sunday, Abdullah said several ministerial and senior officials meetings are leading to the smooth passage for the D-8.

"All eight participating countries have pledged strong commitments to making this small group a success in fostering closer and fruitful economic cooperation among us.

"Even there had been positive remarks from within the OIC itself, indicating confidence that this group will meet the objectives of generating wealth in the member countries," he said.

Somehow, Abdullah said, there are also scepticisms by some parties, especially those from the West, that the group will fail.

"They are free to say anything. We know what actually we are doing. This group will not also to be politicised as dubbed by others because we will ensure that such a situation will not occur," he said.

Turkish Daily News newspaper today published a report quoting diplomatic sources as saying there were doubts about the group's future, fearing it would be politicised.

It said some Western experts are already questioning the objectives of D-8, which they nicknamed "Disaster-8", by arguing that some similar approach in the past had failed.

As to whether other OIC members would form similar small grouping, he said Malaysia will not object to such a move if it brings about prosperity. Nevertheless, he also said that "too many groups can sometimes lead to misery".

The D-8 is an organisation established at the initiative of Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan last year, in order to improve trade relations among Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia and Nigeria.

Abdullah said in bringing to fruition this initiative, it is important to focus cooperation on specific targets to ensure that it really

succeeds.

It is also important to remind member countries that failure or lack of success in the proposed cooperation will be more than an embarrassment.

The D-8 is also mooted due to the lack of cohesiveness within the OIC to establish a solid economic cooperation among its members.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who will address the summit meeting on Sunday, is expected to arrive here tomorrow.

Other leaders include President Suharto of Indonesia, Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan and Hasina Wajed of Pakistan.

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