

27 JUN 2000

OIC-Speech (Reaction)

DR MAHATHIR AN ISLAMIC LEADER OF GREAT VISION, COURAGE

KUALA LUMPUR, June 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was today praised as an Islamic leader of great vision and courage for his contributions to the progress of Islam and his efforts to make Malaysia the pride of the Islamic world.

Dr Mahathir was also acclaimed as a renowned statesman by representatives of the African, Arabic and Asian groups of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

"Malaysia's achievements under his leadership have set an example for other Muslim nations to follow," they said in their reply to the Prime Minister's keynote address during the opening ceremony of the 27th session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) here today.

Pakistan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdul Sattar who represented the Asian group said the Prime Minister had in his speech reminded Muslims of the crucial importance of acquiring knowledge, modern sciences and technology.

This is essential to defend the Muslim nations, not only in politics and economy, "but also against unethical and exploitative multinationals."

In praising Malaysia, Abdul Sattar said it had managed to devise its own innovative strategy to confront the challenges posed to its economy.

Malaysia, he added, had risen as a dynamic, progressive and modern Islamic state.

"We share the pride of the people of Malaysia in their achievements and for setting an example to other Muslim nations. It has reminded us that we are also capable of developing appropriate policy to help ourselves," he added.

Senegal's Foreign Minister Cheikh Tidiane Gadio who represented the African group praised Malaysia for making sustained efforts and harnessing all economic factors for progress and poverty eradication.

Under Dr Mahathir leadership, he said Malaysia had contributed a lot to the activities of the ICFM-OIC.

The Arab group's representative, Ambassador Mustag Abdullah Al-Salih of Oman said he shared the views of Dr Mahathir and agreed to his call for Muslim nations to achieve progress.

-- BERNAMA

SHO AAM