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Dr Mahathir urges dakwah organisations to be open-minded

Farush Khan; Izatun Hanim Shari

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on dakwah organisations to be open-minded in their struggles and be willing to accept the views of others in the interest of Islam and Muslims.

He said while different groups might have different struggles, they had the common goal to develop the Muslim community.

Addressing leaders of 80 dakwah-related non-governmental organisations during lunch at Islamic Arts Museum here, the Prime Minister said if they were not prepared to discuss among each other, their activities might be "duplicated".

The lunch was held in conjunction with the first meeting of the Islamic welfare organisations which was opened by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah.

Also present were the Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Siti Aishah and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Paduka Dr Abdul Hamid Othman.

The meeting was to strengthen ties among the bodies and enable their representatives to discuss their roles in ensuring the success of the Muslims.

Dr Mahathir said he was confident their main goal was to ensure the success of Muslims. Probably, he said, there was also the desire to repeat the success of the Islamic civilisation era.

"Some people say if we are not equipped with modern knowledge we will not achieve that desire, while others think that knowledge is not necessary."

Dr Mahathir said the dakwah bodies should meet and discuss approaches they could take together to achieve their common goal.

"I have no formula for you to succeed but I believe if there are open discussions, you can achieve the goal. If you are united and work towards the success of Muslims, we can perhaps, repeat our glorious past."

The Prime Minister pointed out that being tolerant, considerate and willing to accept the views of others were important.

"Organisations should not think that only their views are right and the views of others are wrong and should be rejected.

"Islam encourages brotherhood, but if we are prepared to disunite just because of differences of opinions, our strength will be eroded. If we are divided into small groups we will then become weaker."

As such, it was very important for all Muslims and Islamic welfare bodies to be tolerant in accepting, considering and using other approaches as well and that they should not be too fanatic or factional in their discussions.

He said most Muslims spoke with nostalgia of the glory days of the Islamic civilisation and expressed a desire to regain such excellence but up to now this had not been achieved.

This was because of conflicting opinions, with some Muslims feeling that command of modern knoweldge was necessary while others felt it was not necessary and that they should return to the era of 1,400 years ago.

Disunity, he said, would only cause Muslims to be left behind.

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