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Mahathir-Economy

MALAYSIA MOOTS MUSLIM DIRECT INVESTMENT FOR OIC COUNTRIES

By: Muin Abdul Majid

DOHA (Qatar), Nov 12 (Bernama) -- Malaysia today proposed the development of a Muslim Direct Investment (MDI) scheme in the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in an effort to boost economic development among member countries.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said under this plan, Muslim investors in capital-rich countries should be encouraged to invest in Muslim countries with know-how and technology but lacking in capital.

"Entrepreneurs in these two types of countries can also team up to invest in resource-rich Muslim countries which lack both capital and skills," he said in his speech delivered at the opening of the ninth OIC summit, here.

Dr Mahathir represented the Asian Group.

He said given the importance of trade in economic development, it was high time that OIC member countries enhance trade and economic cooperation among themselves and break trade barriers against each other.

The easing of trade, he said, would create a big market comprising Muslim countries which would attract foreign direct investment (FDI).

"Properly managed FDI can contribute to our development. A well-planned programme can be developed to promote Muslim Direct Investment in the OIC member countries," he said.

Dr Mahathir said for FDI and MDI to be attracted and the industries to be established in Muslim countries, there was a need for the investment environment to be attractive.

Changing conditions already agreed upon when the investment was made for whatever reasons, including political, would discourage further investments, he said.

The prime minister said it was to be acknowledged that the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) had been doing a good job in project financing but it should do more in countries with difficulties in gaining access to funds.

Dr Mahathir said the OIC had to make a serious effort to ensure that globalisation became an effective instrument for the development of all Muslim countries and the ummah.

He said that should the OIC redefine and refocus itself to be in keeping with the times, the Islamic ummah over the next 20 to 30 years may be able to adjust to the globalised world and the Information Age.

"It is our bounden duty to ensure that this will happen. While we should never let the sufferings of the Palestinians and other Muslims be sidelined or forgotten, we must not let our long-term objectives be dimmed," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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