

10/04/2001

## Gathering of top academic brains

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Malaysia will host the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World (FUIW)'s Sixth Executive Council meeting and Second General Conference for the first time.

FUIW secretary-general Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri said Malaysia's hosting of the two events from April 15 to 19 was a testimony that a developing nation could grow in prosperity while retaining its independence and cultural identity.

"The key to Malaysia's success has been its insistence upon providing educational opportunities to its people," he said in his foreword for the programme book to be handed out to more than 150 chancellors, presidents and rectors of universities who will attend the meeting and conference.

The two big events are being organised by International Islamic University Malaysia to mark the grand opening of its Gombak campus on April 17 by its founder, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

IIUM Rector Professor M. Kamal Hassan said the conference would help universities in the Muslim world to foster closer relations and to work together towards attaining the unity of the Muslim world.

"Co-operation among universities is of utmost importance made necessary, among others, by the triumphant march of globalisation.

"Given the existing moral and cultural linkages, co-operation between Muslims should pose no problems."

He said FUIW's role would simply be to act as an instrument to facilitate co-operation among universities, and to help the Muslim world benefit from the experience and experiments of each other.

The first general conference of the FUIW was held in Rabat, Morocco, from Feb 24 to 26.

The two-day executive council meeting to be held from April 15 at the Legend Hotel will be attended by the Jerash university president in Jordan, Riau university rector (Indonesia), Islamic Azad University president (Iran), Imam Muhd Ben Saud Islamic University director (Saudi Arabia), Anta Diop University Dakar rector (Senegal), International University of Africa director (Sudan), Tishreen University president (Syria), Conakry university rector (Guinea), An-Najah National University president (Palestine), IIUM rector (Malaysia) and Mohamed V University rector (Morocco).

FUIW's objectives are to:

- \* enhance the level of scientific research in all fields;
- \* upgrade and develop higher education to meet the requirements of Islamic countries;
- \* facilitate the exchange of information and studies among universities;
- \* exchange study programmes;
- \* exchange visits of lecturers, researchers and students between universities;
- \* create opportunities for staff of member universities to participate in academic conferences and convene joint symposia and training sessions;
- \* encourage the teaching of the Arabic language and its dissemination in the Islamic countries whose official language is other than Arabic; and,
- \* counter the cultural and intellectual invasion faced by the Muslim Ummah through caring for, preserving and disseminating the Islamic heritage and highlighting its position and impact, in addition to shedding light on the contribution of Muslim scholars to the development of the

human civilisation.