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Mahathir-Muslims

MAHATHIR URGES MUSLIMS TO STOP BICKERING

BY: Abdul Muin Abdul Majid

SANA'A, Aug 16 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that Muslims must discard petty quarrels among themselves and instead strive to acquire the necessary knowledge to propel Muslim countries on the path towards development and eventually be at par with developed nations.

The Prime Minister said discord among the community could lead to Muslim countries becoming weak and thus giving the opportunity to others to oppress Muslims like what was happening in Palestine.

"I believe quarrelling among ourselves is against the teaching of Islam. I believe we'll have to work together to become strong," he said at a meeting and dialogue with members of the Yemeni Shoura Council at the Sana'a Police Academy here.

The advisory council to the Yemeni government comprises intellectuals, ulamas and private sector representatives.

Dr Mahathir, who is on his second day of visit to Yemen, said this was an important strategy for mutual development and to enable Muslims to defend each other.

In his 40-minute opening remarks, Dr Mahathir said Muslims were not stupid as proven by their ability in the past to establish proud civilisations and empires.

Dr Mahathir said: "In Malaysia, we are trying to prove that a Muslim country can be as developed as other developed countries in the world."

He expressed confidence that if Muslims could join hands, in a few decades, they too could be as rich as developed nations in the world and at that stage, no one would dare to oppress Muslims any longer.

"As Muslims, we have a duty to protect each other. But we can't do that if we are weak and poor," he said.

Dr Mahathir also shared with the more than 200-strong audience how Malaysia managed to be politically stable and transformed its economy to become the 17th largest trading country in the world.

He provided an insight on how Kuala Lumpur dealt with the 1997 regional economic and financial crisis, explained how "Malaysia Incorporated" worked and what Malaysia was doing to gain from the information technology era.

He said it was important for Muslim or developing countries not to miss the information age and that to be rich, a country could not depend on the agriculture sector alone as it would be better if it took the path of industrialisation.

Fielding questions from the floor, the prime minister reminded his audience about the dangers of western-formulated globalisation.

On the subject of Asian currency, he said even the "euro" used in Europe did not work quite well as it had no intrinsic value.

He explained that a study was being currently undertaken on the possibility of using the gold dinar for trading.

"If you hold the dinar as reserves and trade is done using the gold dinar, it's possible to stabilise the value of a currency," he said.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir held a four-eye meeting with his Yemeni counterpart Abdul Kader Ba Jammal followed by an hour-long bilateral delegation meeting at the Republican Palace here.

After the meeting, two memoranda of understanding were signed, one on the establishment of the Yemen-Malaysia Joint Commission, and the other on cooperation and training for civil servants.

-- BERNAMA

MAM RYN