

'Pooling resources the key to success'

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PUTRAJAYA: Muslim countries can help each other to develop by pooling their resources, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said in a world of interdependence, "the rich are as dependent on the poor as the poor are dependent of the rich."

"Pooling resources is essential when doing business. Outsourcing is the name of the game today," he said in his keynote address of the OIC Business Forum at the IOI Marriot Hotel here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said besides participating in the process, Muslim countries could also provide complementary roles among themselves in the production of industrial goods.

"If we are jointly involved then it would be natural for us to accept our own products for our market.

"There is nothing like a strong home market to support and ensure the success of products," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who will chair the 10th Session of the 57-member OIC Summit starting today, said Muslims must be economically strong to gain influence in the international arena.

Dr Mahathir said Islam encouraged trade and prescribed in detail the way business should be done.

"But despite the natural wealth endowed the Muslims by Allah, we Muslims are not making full use of the opportunities afforded us by the many resources at our disposal," he said.

He said many Muslims were still economically and technologically dependent on non-Muslims, some of whom were not well-disposed towards them.

"We should not think of an economic war against non-Muslims. But we need to maximise the return from the resources that they have," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said Muslim countries could work closer with other developing countries in order to formulate international trade and financial regimes to benefit the rich and poor.

He said poor countries had in Cancun, Mexico recently, succeeded in resisting the plan by rich countries to

impose on the world self-serving policies.

"But saying no is not enough. We have to come up with alternatives which will ensure the wealth of this world is more equitably distributed," he said.

Dr Mahathir also gave his commitment to present views and ideas on matters relating to Islam and the Muslims through international forums after his retirement.

"I could speak and explain about such matters in international forums in any part of the Muslim world," the Prime Minister said in reply to a question from a participant during an open dialogue at the business forum.

"In such forums, it will be necessary to give my views. It may not be neces-

sary to accept my views but we can discuss on whatever views that are presented."

Asked his advice to the business community from Muslim nations before he stepped down, Dr Mahathir said they should take advantage of the OIC exposition to increase trade and business interaction.

"Muslim countries are invited to display their products. The problem with us is that we don't know the capacity of each other.

"For instance, at the OIC expo, I went to the Kuwaiti stand and learnt that Kuwait, which is almost a desert, is producing paper for export. Now I know that perhaps Kuwait will be one of the countries that we could buy paper from."