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Scholars-Reaction

DELEGATES LAUD FRUITFUL SCHOLARS' CONFERENCE

PUTRAJAYA, July 12 (BERNAMA) -- Delegates at the World Conference of Islamic Scholars which ended today lauded the convening of the three-day event, saying it was held at the right time when the Muslim world is grappling with numerous issues.

Dr Muhyiddin Ahmad of Egypt said the hosting of the event by Malaysia offered a solid platform for Muslims from all over the world to express their views.

"At a time when Muslims face difficulties to speak about Islam, the conference offered a venue to voice our views, resolve issues and promote unity.

"Often, conferences would discuss political issues and are attended by political leaders but this was different. It allowed religious scholars to gather for the first time," he said when met after the closing of the three-day conference by the Religious Adviser to the Prime Minister, Tan Sri Dr Abdul Hamid Othman.

London-based 'The Muslim News' editor Ahmed Versi said the conference allowed Muslim intellectuals to deliberate pressing issues.

"Topics like globalisation that impacted the Muslims were discussed and this was useful. I was impressed by the women issues highlighted such as rights and family institution. These have been neglected for a long time," he said.

However, he expressed disappointment that alternative solutions for some of the current issues were not discussed.

"Many youngsters today are influenced by globalisation through music and culture. What is the alternative solution for this? The ulamas must be aware of contemporary political, economic and social issues happening in the global village," he added.

Meanwhile, Secretary-General of the Indonesian Council of Ulama Prof Dr Mohamed Din Syamsuddin said the conference would set a precedent for similar gatherings in future.

He hoped the resolutions passed could be implemented to develop and strengthen unity of the ummah, and would not remain merely as rhetorics.

He said that in the 70's, many Western intellectuals had anticipated that either Malaysia or Indonesia would lead the resurgence of the Islamic world in the South-east Asian region.

"The forecast was proven correct when Malaysia under the leadership of (Prime Minister Datuk Seri) Dr Mahathir Mohamad emerged as the Asian nation that succeeded in bringing progress to the ummah," he said, adding that Malaysia was on the right platform to act as the catalyst to development and resurgence of Muslim nations in the Asian region.

On the setting up of the permanent secretariat for the World Conference of Islamic Scholars, he hoped it would be active in voicing the views of the Muslim community concerning issues affecting them.

Professor Hideomi Muto of the Shariah Research Centre at Japan's Takushoku University said efforts for greater unification among Muslims and Islamic countries should continue even after the conclusion of each conference.

Describing the effort in bringing Muslim scholars to sit down and exchange views for the betterment of the ummah as 'very commendable', he said the resolutions passed at the conference would contribute towards helping minority Muslims like those in Japan to become stronger.

Furthermore, he noted that the advice from Dr Mahathir and Sheikh Al-Azhar Dr Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi calling for Muslims to stay united and seek knowledge were vital amid current global developments.

"Their advice should be regarded as the key to ignite further awareness over future threats that await us," he added.

Meanwhile, Zahir Abdullah Al-Abri from Oman's Justice Ministry heaped praises over the working papers presented at the conference, saying they were very specific and the scholars discussed issues with an open mind.

He would like to see similar events organised from time to time.

His view was echoed by the Supreme Mufti of the Asian parts of Russia, Sheikh Nafigulla Ashirov who said he believed that such conferences would contribute towards the future development of the Muslim civilisation and co-existence between civilisations.

A Malaysian Chinese Muslim Association representative, Datuk Abdullah Ma said the Malaysian government should be lauded for its efforts in bringing together ulamas from all over the world.

He stressed that it was important for the Malaysian government to further enhance its cooperation with local scholars to ensure that everybody received the message from the conference.

-- BERNAMA

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