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OIC-Mahathir (Reaction)

DR M'S SPEECH PROVIDES RIGHT PERSPECTIVE FOR OIC'S FUTURE DIRECTION

PUTRAJAYA, Oct 16 (Bernama) -- Leaders of OIC member countries today hailed Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's speech as providing the right perspective for the future direction of the organisation as well as the Muslims worldwide.

Most of the leaders said Dr Mahathir's speech was important in guiding Muslims to solve the many problems and challenges besetting them.

Sudan President Omer Hassan Ahmaed El-Bashir said Dr Mahathir had clearly defined the problems of the Muslim world and how to overcome them.

"It's a major speech... it should be printed and distributed to all Muslims," he told Bernama.

He said Sudan was confident Malaysia would be able to steer the 57-member organisation into a more action-oriented and strengthen the solidarity and unity among Muslims.

In his opening address at the 10th Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Leaders' Summit, Dr Mahathir set the tone for deliberations at the biggest gathering of Islamic nations with a call to them to use their strength and close ranks in dealing with issues confronting Muslims worldwide.

The Prime Minister said with 1.3 billion people, the Muslim countries were actually strong but they had never really tried to unite and cooperate.

Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai described the speech as a "very good one", saying Dr Mahathir outlined a lot of things on the present state of the Ummah and what should be done in the next three years.

"He is very right in his speech... was best for all," he said, adding that the Muslim world must work together to tell the world that terrorism is the enemy of Islam.

Sierra Leone President Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabbah said he was very impressed with Dr Mahathir's address.

"...very intellectual... I hope it will get across to all Muslims," he said.

Dr Ahmad said Dr Mahathir also enlighten on the confusion due to various interpretation of Islam and this was very useful in putting the religion in the right perspective.

Suriname Special Envoy to the President Rafiek Chiragally said Dr Mahathir had put Islam on top with his message that only through unity the Ummah could become stronger and fight the enemy of Islam.

The message was very clear that only by unity and with clear vision that the Muslims could develop their economic strength.

Benin's Minister for Foreign Affairs and African Integration Rogatien Biao said the speech clearly touched on the problems of Muslims and the need for solidarity and economic development among Muslims.

"So, now we have to move from politics to economic position," he said.

Djibouti Prime Minister Dileita Mohamed Dileita said the speech gave a perspective to Islamic countries on how they should prepare for future challenges.

He said Malaysia had played an important role in the creation of the OIC and now once again had the opportunity to contribute more to the development of the Ummah.

"As OIC Chairman, I believe Malaysia will give all efforts to make OIC an important tool for Muslim countries," he said.

Kazakhstan Foreign Minister Kassymzhomart Tokaev said Dr Mahathir had delivered a strong message to be studied seriously by all member states.

He said there were key issues which OIC member countries were facing such as education, science and technology, economy and also the need to have deeper understanding of Islam.

Palestine Ambassador to Malaysia Ahmad Al-Farra said Dr Mahathir had outlined various strategies for Muslims in his farewell speech which "I strongly believe will solve all their problems."

"If they are still just looking for nice communique, words and resolutions and so on...then they will continue for another 50 or 100 years in the same place where they are", said the veteran diplomat.

-- BERNAMA

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