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OIC-Syed Hamid

GREAT DEMAND FOR DR MAHATHIR FOR TALKS IN WEST ASIA

By: Ahmad Kamal Dahalan

TEHRAN, May 29 (Bernama) -- Many member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) want Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to give talks there before and after his retirement.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today leaders of the countries concerned respected the views and ideas of Dr Mahathir whom they considered as a great statesman.

Syed Hamid, who is here to attend the 30th Session of the OIC Foreign Ministers' Meeting, told Malaysian journalists that Dr Mahathir was accepted by all Muslim countries as a firm and respected leader.

"Many leaders of OIC countries whom we met had expressed their wish for Dr Mahathir to visit their countries and to give talks and advice," he said.

On the current conference, Syed Hamid said its theme, "Unity and Dignity of the Ummah", was most appropriate and suited the prevailing condition and situation.

He said that after the Sept 11 incident, Muslims were continuously oppressed as could be seen from the invasion of Iraq and the situation in Palestine due to the lack of solidarity among Muslims themselves.

"How can we become an effective organisation if there is no solidarity among ourselves with each nation adopting a stand for its own benefit only," he said.

Syed Hamid said the OIC's immediate concern was the need to restore the dignity and respect of Muslims and the unity of OIC member countries.

"We must prevent whatever attempts made to marginalise the OIC or neutralise its importance and influence in serving the cause of the Ummah.

"OIC member countries should also be wary of those trying to drive a wedge between them merely to protect their vested interest," he said.

Syed Hamid said the OIC had benefited Malaysia a lot because it was through the OIC that it had become well-known among Muslim nations as a country that was vocal on behalf of the OIC and as a nation that had expertise in various fields.

"It was also through the OIC that Malaysia had promoted its tourism sector in the Arab nations," he said.

Thus, Syed Hamid said, Malaysia wanted the OIC to operate as a body with credibility and respect.

At such a meeting, he said there would be many resolutions passed but what was important was to translate these decisions and resolutions into an effective action plan.

He said the meeting would also be used by Malaysia to obtain useful inputs as preparation for hosting the OIC Summit in Putrajaya in October.

-- BERNAMA

AKD AHH AO