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OIC-TECHNOLOGY

ISLAMIC COUNTRIES NEED TO ACHIEVE AT LEAST 14 PCT OF WORLD SCIENTIFIC OUTPUT

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 9 (Bernama) -- Islamic countries should achieve at least 14 percent of the world's scientific output by the year 2020 through increased investments in science and technology including research and development, the conference on Science and Technology (S&T) was told today.

The chairman of the organising committee for the conference, Datuk Dr Salleh Mohd Nor, said the gathering also recommended that OIC members increase investments in R&D of at least 1.4 percent of their respective Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2020.

The assembly brought together participants mainly scientists and technologists from Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) countries over the past several days to discuss the challenges facing Islamic countries in the era of globalisation, with emphasis on science and technology.

These were contained in the recommendations adopted under what is regarded as "Vision 1441 (2020)," the guiding principle in steering science and technology for the next two decades for the Islamic world.

Other important agenda outlined was recommendation to conduct an annual OIC conference on Science and Technology in parallel to the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) annual meeting.

Dr Salleh said that it was important to establish a seed fund totalling US\$500 million to support, among others the establishment of a Pan Islamic R&D fund to promote R&D investments among member countries.

The seed fund would also be use for the establishment of a Muslim World Technology Investment Fund such as venture capital for the acquisition of technologies and growth of new technology-based companies.

The recommendation also calls for the greater industry participation and investment in R&D and technology development activities through provision of attractive fiscal and financial incentives as well as other support measures.

The thrust should include the establishment of a strong and dedicated institutional framework for science, technology and innovation incorporating scientific management and advisory system with active participation from all sectors and establish a network of academies of science through the OIC to strengthen the S&T management and advisory system at all levels.

Dr Salleh explained that the conference had also recommended efforts to enhance and expand opportunities and participation of women in the mainstream of development in particular areas relating to S&T in OIC member countries and to increase places for OIC nationals for undergraduate and post-graduate education in institutions of higher learning in member countries.

Other recommendations include the launch of science and technology management training courses for senior personnel as well as those from industries among member countries and expanding capabilities towards new and emerging technologies such as nanotechnology and photonics.

The recommendation also urged the OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (Comstech) and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) to harmonise the development of a comprehensive information portal/database on S&T and industry of member countries.

They had also recommended that Malaysia in collaboration with Comstech and the IDB to initiate smart partnership to harness scientific and technical strengths of existing and proposed centres of excellence

among member countries.

Dr Salleh said that the recommendations which were in the form of a resolution would be handed over to the Prime Minister and OIC incoming chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for further action.

-- BERNAMA

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