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OIC-Ends

ISLAMIC SUMMIT ENDS WITH PUTRAJAYA DECLARATION

PUTRAJAYA, Oct 17 (Bernama) -- The 10th Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit ended here tonight with the Putrajaya Declaration which spells out the new way forward for the Muslim world.

The two-day largest meeting of Islamic leaders, held at the sprawling Putrajaya Convention Centre (PCC) in this Malaysia's brand new administrative capital, brought together kings, Arab royals, presidents and prime ministers just two weeks before Malaysian prime minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad steps down after 22 years in office.

The closing ceremony began with Dr Mahathir, who chaired the summit, inviting Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar to read out the Putrajaya Declaration.

The summit was the first and largest gathering of Muslim leaders since the Sept 11 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.

Among those present at the closing ceremony were Iranian President Seyed Mohammad Khatami, Pakistani President Gen Pervez Musharraf, King Abdullah of Jordan and Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who will succeed Dr Mahathir on Oct 31.

Wives of the leaders attending the summit also held their inaugural First Ladies OIC Dialogue and adopted a 10-point resolution, which among other things, called for the establishment of a permanent secretariat within the organisation to deal with women's issues.

Dr Mahathir announced a donation of US\$1 million for the OIC from the Government of Kuwait.

The Prime Minister received a certificate of merit from the OIC in recognition of his "outstanding, substantive and effective" contribution towards the noble objective of the 57-member grouping.

Sierra Leone President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah read the citation while OIC Secretary-General Dr Abdelouahed Belkeziz presented the certificate to Dr Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir in acknowledging the kind words of Kabbah thanked all the leaders and delegates as well as the translators who had made the summit a great success.

The almost hour-long closing ceremony ended with the recitation of the verses from the Holy Quran and prayers.

As he declared the summit closed, leaders and delegates in the Plenary Hall of the state-of-the-art Putrajaya Convention Centre lined up to wish him the best and have a photo opportunity with Dr Mahathir.

The summit, the first held in the Asia Pacific region, was the largest gathering of Muslim leaders since the inception of the 57-member OIC in 1969.

Apart from Muslim leaders from West Asia, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Philippine President Gloria Arroyo were present as special guests at the opening ceremony.

-- BERNAMA

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