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Scholars-Ong

MAHATHIR'S STATEMENT IS REASSURING, SAYS ONG

PUTRAJAYA, July 11 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement on the need for the various races to work together has reassured the non-Muslims of the co-existence between the multi-racial society in developing the country.

MCA President Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting said as the leader of a plural society, the Prime Minister was speaking through experience when he spoke on racial cooperation at the opening of the World Conference of Muslim Scholars here.

"This is the key to Malaysia's success where the Muslims and non-Muslims co-exist and cooperate in facing challenges of nation building," he told Bernama.

"Dr Mahathir was speaking from experience, with wisdom...as a non-Muslim, I'm impressed and it is most reassuring to the non-Muslims," said Ong, who is also the Minister of Housing and Local Government.

Ong was present at the opening of the conference yesterday by Dr Mahathir who, among other things, stressed on the need for Muslims to have the correct interpretation of Islam, including the aspect of co-existence with the non-Muslims.

Dr Mahathir, during the dialogue later, had said: "Some people say that it is wrong even to talk to non-Muslims. It is wrong to be in contact with them, to work and to play with them...I think this is a myth that has to be removed."

Ong said the message at the conference, attended by scholars throughout the world, was most important considering that Malaysia had been looked upon by other Islamic countries as a model.

He said conference participants from all over the world could observe the racial harmony in Malaysia which had enabled the country to develop.

"They see Malaysia's success, we are not speaking theoretically, we speak from experience which has been proven," he said.

Ong said he was also most impressed by Dr Mahathir's statement that the pursuit of knowledge should not be confined to religious teachings alone but also to include other fields including science and technology.

"When I listen to Dr Mahathir's speech, I'm more convinced that Islam is truly an open religion and actually encourages its ummah to acquire knowledge," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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