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OIC-Kazakhstan

MALAYSIA CAN PLAY BIG ROLE AS OIC CHAIRMAN, SAYS KAZAKHSTAN

By: Ahmad Zukiman Zain

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 3 (Bernama) -- Malaysia can play a big role in leading the 57-member Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) into becoming an effective, respected and organised body, Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Malaysia, Ikram Adyrbekov, said here today.

Describing Malaysia as a rare exception in the developing world in terms of possessing high information and communication technology, he was confident that the country could positively influence other member countries and serve as an example for action.

"The leadership of this country has advanced views on ongoing world developments, calls for observance of genuine Islamic values and strictly rejects all kinds of religious extremism.

"During numerous OIC meetings, Malaysia has always stressed the need for member countries to perfect and continuously upgrade knowledge in different spheres, not only in theology," he told Bernama in an interview in conjunction with the 10th OIC Summit to be held in Putrajaya in October.

The Central Asian republic joined OIC in 1995 and has been participating actively in its activities, including hosting the just-ended Islamic Development Bank (IDB) meeting in Almaty.

Adyrbekov hoped that by having a concrete agenda and initiatives, Malaysia would overcome the main current challenge faced by the OIC -- discord among its member-States.

Malaysia will take over from Qatar as the OIC chairman for the next three years when it hosts the Summit from Oct 11 to 18.

Adyrbekov said the upcoming OIC Summit was an important event as it would be the first to be held after the Sept 11 terrorist attacks on the United States which had changed the entire global situation.

"We can expect that the Summit will focus on the situation in the Middle East and underline the need for preserving the positive image of Islam in the wake of the worldwide anti-terrorism campaign," he said.

The most important thing was to find out what could be done to make the OIC an effective organisation and maintain peaceful dialogue between Islam and the West, he said.

Asked how the West could be made to better understand Islam in the aftermath of the Sept 11 attacks, he said open and unbiased dialogue must be held to understand each other.

"Religion is a very delicate aspect and many times was a reason for conflict. Today religion must be a tool for unification and friendship," he said.

Kazakhstan is organising an International Religious Assembly from Sept 23 to 24 in its capital of Astana aimed at discussing the potential of religion to contribute to world peace.

He agreed with Malaysia's call to the international community to address the root cause of terrorism in their effort to overcome the scourge.

"By arresting and eliminating terrorists one would not achieve any sensible result. The best way of fighting terrorism is resolving its root causes.

"And terrorism does not refer to Muslims in particular. It can happen in any place where people face social difficulties and live in poverty," he said.

On the Summit's theme "Knowledge and Morality for the Progress of the

Ummah", Adyrbekov said knowledge and morality were the important things needed by the Muslim community.

"The Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr) Mahathir Mohamad is absolutely right in warning Muslims not to be limited by religious studies.

"Moreover, there are some groups which are not only misrepresenting Islamic teachings but spreading a negative attitude with regard to modern non-religious knowledge," he said.

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