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Scholars-Response

OVERWHELMING RESPONSE TO MULTAQA FROM ISLAMIC SCHOLARS

PUTRAJAYA, July 8 (Bernama) -- The overwhelming response to the three-day World Conference of Islamic Scholars, which will begin here on Thursday, has forced the organisers to turn down requests for extra participants due to limited seats.

The chairman of the conference executing committee, Datuk Mohamad Nakhaei Ahmad said the conference had attracted 90 foreign and 750 local scholars, more than the anticipated figure of 700 participants including 80 from outside the country.

"It's beyond our expectation and due to limited seats we have to decline requests for extra participants," he told Bernama at the Marriott Hotel here, the venue of the conference.

The conference to provide is the brainchild of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who will also officiate the opening on Thursday.

Among the famous Islamic scholars to attend the conference or "multaqa" is Sheikh Al-Azhar of Egypt, Dr Sayyid Muhammad Tantawi, who will deliver a keynote address entitled "True Religion in Facing Challenges of Globalisation".

"The encouraging response is probably due to the working papers, which focus on current issues and the future direction of Muslims in facing the era of globalisation," said Mohamad Nakhaie, who is also the president of the Malaysian Islamic Dakwah Foundation (YADIM).

A total of 22 working papers in Arabic and English are expected to be tabled at the conference, which is organised by the Prime Minister's Department.

He said the working papers would be translated into English and Malay while those in English, back translated in Arabic and Malay.

In addition, he said the participants would also be given a running translation of the working papers as they were presented.

"The purpose is to ensure that the message is effectively conveyed to the participants," he said.

Nakhaie hoped that the conference could be the turning point in terms of society's perception of Islam, which should be looked at as a comprehensive way of life instead of just rituals.

He said the "multaqa" hopefully would create awareness among Muslims on the importance of developing strength in all fields, especially economy and knowledge.

This would include the ability to supply sophisticated equipment for defence, he said.

-- BERNAMA

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