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Scholars-End

WORLD CONFERENCE OF ISLAMIC SCHOLARS ENDS ON HIGH NOTE

By: Jamaluddin Muhammad

PUTRAJAYA, July 12 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian-initiated World Conference of Islamic Scholars concluded here today after three days of deliberation with the promise of forging an action plan to uplift the ummah in facing global challenges.

The gathering of about 900 ulamas, including 90 from abroad, is set to leave a lasting mark with the proposed formation of a permanent secretariat and a blue print to push forward efforts of achieving Islamic excellence in various fields.

This resulted from their frank self-evaluation of Muslims' weaknesses in areas such as economy, military, science and technology, and education.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad triggered the discussion when he called on the Muslim scholars to play their part in bringing back the glory days of Islam and overcome the misinterpretation on the religion which had split the Muslims.

Opening the conference on Thursday, he urged them to encourage Muslims to acquire knowledge in all fields including science and technology for the good of the ummah.

"If we misinterpret our religion and stress only on religious knowledge and nothing else, we are not going to be able to fulfill our obligation to the ummah, to be able to defend them, to bring honour and respect to our religion," said Dr Mahathir.

Taking note of his concern, the delegates gave their commitment to enhance the betterment of the ummah.

They agreed on the need to hold discussion on the implementation of the blue print from time to time.

The secretariat to be based in Kuala Lumpur would act as a catalyst to produce tangible steps derived from the constructive ideas in order to enhanced the status of the ummah and the Muslim world.

The conference received a big boost with the presence of prominent scholars including Sheikh Al-Azhar Dr Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi who regarded Malaysia as a model of a progressive Islamic nation.

He also cleared the air on the question of ulamas by asking Muslims to reject totally the false ulamas who deviated from the true teaching of Islam for their own interest.

Issues ranging from globalisation to poverty, the management of resources, women, military, education and the roles of Muslim non-governmental organisations and the opposition parties were discussed.

Apart from the worldly aspects of knowledge, the conference examined pertinent issues touching on the ummah's faith that should begin with the correct interpretation of Islam.

The conference also cautioned Muslims on the need to thwart the expansion of extremism and terrorist groups which used Islam to advance their own cause.

In the final analysis, the participants acknowledged the fact that the conference had achieved its objectives of getting the scholars from all over the world to focus on finding solutions to deal with issues faced by the ummah.

-- BERNAMA

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