

Help non-Muslims also, urges Mahathir

STAFF - 4 MAY 2009

KUALA LUMPUR: Muslims should help not only each other but also non-Muslims, said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"Why is it all right to receive contributions from non-Muslims but wrong to contribute to non-Muslims?" he asked, adding that Muslims should not hesitate to help non-Muslims.

The former prime minister said this was one of the misunderstandings of Islamic teachings.

He said it was important to show the kind facet of Islam to improve the religion's image.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at the launch of the Malaysian office of Islamic Relief Worldwide at the Sheraton Imperial

hotel here yesterday.

Islamic Relief Worldwide, founded in 1984, is an international humanitarian aid agency based in Birmingham, England.

It focuses on emergency relief, development, orphans and *waqf*, an Islamic form of continuous charity.

Its president Dr Hany El Banna said Malaysia was chosen to house one of its 11 fund-raising offices around the world as the country had the potential to become a regional hub for the organisation's work.

"Islamic Relief Malaysia Bhd was incorporated on June 25 last year but it took time after the incorporation to allocate a budget to run the Malaysian office," he added.