Let Islamic products speak for themselves: Nazrin
Malaysiakini.com
Disember 16, 2010

A more productive way to make Islamic products acceptable and attractive to the non-Muslim market, is by allowing the products to speak for themselves, says the Raja Muda of Perak, Raja Nazrin Shah.

He said the design and promotion of Islamic products should reflect high standards that employ ethical practices as prescribed by Islam.

"In business, Islam advocates the proper balance between commercialism and humanitarianism, as well as profit and social responsibility.

"Islam, in fact, introduced a number of important business principles more than 14 centuries ago, including the concept of minimum wage and the right of buyers to return goods they are not satisfied with," he explained.

Raja Nazrin said this in his speech at the launch of the international edition of 'Demystifying Islamic Finance: Correcting Misconceptions, Advancing Value Propositions' in Kuala Lumpur today.

He said under today's business climate, businesses are under constant public scrutiny.

"Many look beyond the products and services of a company and at what the company does, in terms of its impact on the community and the environment, and in respect of how it treats and develops its people.

"Muslim businesses, particularly those that are located in western markets, can help correct the false perceptions of Islam by acting as responsible corporate citizens in their local community.

"And because of their ethical underpinnings, Muslim businesses, if they remain true to their calling, are uniquely placed to play such a role," he added.

Raja Nazrin said he believed that this is what has driven the rise of the Islamic finance industry and going forward, it is what will continue to make it appealing to investors.

"The requirement for funds to be invested only in worthy businesses, to be based on risk-sharing and on real assets, and the prohibitions against interest and speculation, ensures that no financial product that can cause harm, ever gets released into the market," he added.

He highlighted that this is the reason Islamic finance has become recognised as a viable alternative to conventional finance.

More and more governments, he said, are offering their support to ensure the development of this relatively young industry.

To date, there are some 300 Islamic banks and investment firms operating in more than 75 countries, and the industry has been growing at an average rate of 20 per cent in recent years.

"I do not think that Islamic finance is anywhere near substituting conventional forms of finance, but what it can do is to inform, influence and, ultimately, improve, the world of business and finance," he added.

Meanwhile, the book is published by Zaid Ibrahim & Co (Zico).

- Bernama