

Halal vaccines made here for global market

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SEREMBAN: Made-in-Malaysia halal vaccines may, over time meet the global Muslim demand for such products.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the Organisation of the Islamic Conference had been receptive to the idea of Malaysia becoming a producer and exporter of halal vaccines.

The Prime Minister hoped to see the beginning of partnerships with other Muslim countries and multinational companies to fulfil the need for such vaccines around the world.

"Where possible, there, should always be health-related products (globally) that comply with a community's religious beliefs," he said at the ground-breaking ceremony of the RM350 million National Institute for Natural Products, Vaccine and Biologicals (9Bio) here yesterday.

The Government-owned facility,



Abdullah looking at a 9Bio project model after the ground-breaking ceremony at Techpark, Bandar Enstek, yesterday. — Bernama picture

located on a 30-hectare site at Techpark in Labu, is one of several private funding initiatives projects under the Nintil Malaysia Plan.

Abdullah said one of the core

functions of 9Bio was the development of halal vaccines which, he noted, had not received the importance it should.

Abdullah invited local and for-

eign researchers to collaborate with 9Bio to prevent duplication of efforts and to ensure their resources were optimised.

These should also include assisting research in avian influenza and being part of Asean's preparedness in dealing with pandemic flu.

Health Minister Datuk Dr Chua Soi Lek, speaking to reporters later, said 9Bio would be actively looking into implementing, promoting and monitoring rigorous research in the latest potential area in medicine—traditional and complementary medicine.

Once operational in 2008, 9Bio would initially focus on transfer of skills and technology.

Dr Chua said 9Bio would also have the best facilities for herbal products evaluation, including R&D and clinical trials.

He said the National Institute was already at the final stage of clinical trials for a herbal-based medication for Hepatitis B, and the ministry would be announcing the results very soon.