

NEW YORK: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has called for sincere dialogue among the bickering human family, and provided an insight into how the schism between the west and the Muslim world may be bridged.

Speaking at the United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday, the prime minister, who is also the chairman of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), said Islam was not the source of intolerance between peoples of different faiths, and urged for the demonisation of Islam to be stopped and Islamophobia removed.

"The politics of fear must cease to dictate the conduct of relations between peoples and nations. If they do, then prejudice and irrationality will continue to prevail in the affairs of the world and dialogues will continue to fail," he said.

Abdullah said much of the ills in the world resulted from irrational actions caused by prejudices in human attitudes, no thanks to the failure to dialogue, communicate and reach out to one another as fellow human beings.

"To talk, however, is easy. To dialogue and communicate is more difficult," he said, noting that much of the dialogue that did take place resulted in the parties talking at, instead of talking to, one another.

"In our relations, we must not be patronising and condescending and certainly not threatening," he said.

Abdullah calls for sincere dialogue

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Abdullah pointed out that the greatest discord today existed among the descendants of Abraham - the followers of Judaism, Christianity and Islam - who had in fact shared a common beginning which was the religion of Abraham.

He said the sense of humiliation being felt by the Muslim world was the root cause for the loss of trust and confidence between the Muslim world on one side and the Judeo-Christian civilisation on the other.

Prejudices against Muslims stemmed from a lack of understanding of the true nature of Islam, he said.

He noted that any dialogue would certainly fail if it was predetermined

that certain states were "rogues" or necessarily "evil".

He stressed that such name-calling provided an excuse not to listen, let alone engage in serious negotiations.

Countries that purportedly sponsor terror and seek weapons of mass destruction have been labelled such names by the United States.

In addition, Abdullah criticised the early decision by some countries to not recognise the Hamas government in Palestine which led to blocked funds and assistance.

"Surely it is irrational and applying double standards to dictate or show preferences as to who should be elected into power," he said. - Bernama

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