

PM to Muslim nations: Do more to fight corruption

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday told Muslim nations to fight corruption more actively, noting that they rated poorly on perceptions of corruption.

An analysis of Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), he said, showed that out of 158 countries surveyed last year, the Muslim country with the best record could only rank 29th.

"More than half of the bottom 10 places were occupied by Muslim countries," he said.

"If we average the total score of Muslim nations as a whole, we would only score 3.06 out of 10 points, placing us at 89th place."

Abdullah, who is also Organisation of Islamic Conferences (OIC) chairman, said this in his keynote address at the OIC Anti-Corruption and Enhancing Integrity Forum in the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

"The current condition that Muslim countries find themselves in is deeply alarming and distressing, considering Islam's glorious legacy," he said.

Abdullah noted that many of the development challenges that the Muslim ummah face stem from poverty problems, poor governance and limited education opportunities, all of which are exacerbated by the existence of corruption.

Citing Malaysia's efforts in fighting corruption, Abdullah said the government's efforts to improve the public delivery system has resulted in faster transactions and better processes which eliminate systemic gaps and loopholes that allow for corruption and graft.

He said other efforts include the enhancement of investigative expertise and capabilities to fight graft, the instilling of ethics and moral values via the national integrity plan and by introducing Islam Hadhari as an approach towards development.

Participants of the three day conference are made up of anti-corruption entity leaders and heads of agencies involved in anti-corruption and integrity efforts from the OIC member countries, and local observers mainly from law enforcement agencies.

Meanwhile, Anti-Corruption Agency director general Datuk Seri Zulkipli Mat Noor said the second study on perception of corruption in Malaysia is under way.

It will be carried out by an independent consultant for the special Cabinet committee on strengthening the government administration, he said.

The first survey was completed in 2002 and the results formed the basis in the formulation of the Integrity Institute of Malaysia and the National Integrity Plan.

It displayed shocking results where students in tertiary institution - who were going to be future leaders of the country - indicated they were receptive to the idea of accepting bribes.