

Abdullah: Focus on economic co-operation

NS-27/2/2007

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday called on Muslim nations to pay greater attention to their economic development and not be sidetracked by political issues afflicting them.

Abdullah, who is Organisation of Islamic Conference chairman, urged member nations to pool their resources through greater bilateral and multilateral economic co-operation to eradicate poverty and backwardness among Muslims.

He said OIC members, who are spread out in Asia, Middle East and Africa, must take the necessary practical steps to enhance trade and other economic activities, and facilitate greater interaction among their respective private sectors.

Speaking at a joint Press conference with his Syrian counterpart Mohamad Naji Otri, Abdullah said the OIC was now focused on greater economic co-operation between its members.

Earlier, Abdullah met Syrian President Dr

Bashar al-Assad, followed by a full delegation discussion with Assad, Vice-President Farouq Al Shara and selected members of the administration.

Among those present from the Malaysian delegation were Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdullah Md Zin.

"We did touch on the problems of the Middle East but at the same time we are also aware of the importance of addressing the issues of poverty and backwardness of some Muslim countries.

"I've also informed the president and vice-president that the OIC is now giving more attention to economic co-operation.

"The OIC has already set up the annual Islamic Economic Forum which will not only give opportunities to Muslim businessmen but will also lead to more bilateral and multilateral

activities among Muslim countries."

Abdullah, who had earlier witnessed the signing of several memorandums of understanding and agreements between the governments of Malaysia and Syria, and private companies, pointed that the co-operation between the two nations was a good example.

