

# 'Hold rational dialogues'

## Muslims must help fight Islamophobia, says French scholar

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Islamophobia among Western societies can be eliminated if Muslims hold rational dialogues with non-Muslim societies, said a French scholar.

Professor in Islamic Civilisation Dr Mahmoud Azab of the La Sorbonne University in Paris said the spread of Islamophobia resulted from the actions of some Western media groups that promoted the fear of Islam and Muslims among Westerners, especially after 9/11.

"This problem has been exacerbated by some segments of Muslims themselves, who fear changes and refuse to communicate with non-Muslims.

"We should talk more with the non-Muslims and explain to them about Islam and provide insight into the greatness of the Islamic achievements in the arts and sciences.

"As Muslims, we should give guidance to others in understanding more about ourselves instead of closing off our minds to the world," he said, after presenting a paper at the third World Al-Azhar Alumni Multaqa (conference) yesterday.

Ali Al-Sayyid Abd Rahman Al-Hashim, the judiciary and religious



**Stressing a point:** Dr Mahmoud speaking to conference participants with Prof Abdul Shukor beside him in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — Bernama

affairs adviser to the President of the United Arab Emirates, advised Muslims not to react emotionally to incidents such as the recent publication of a caricature of Prophet Muhammad in a Danish newspaper.

"Holding protests and demonstra-

tions is not the answer to the problems affecting Muslims," he told the 1,000 participants from 69 countries at the conference which began on Friday.

On Islam Hadhari, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Abdul Shukor Husin said the

»Holding protests is not the answer to the problems affecting Muslims«

ALI AL-SAYYID ABD RAHMAN  
AL-HASHIM

concept being promoted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was criticised by those who were *jumud* (having narrow minds).

"Islam Hadhari or Civilisational Islam is the Government's comprehensive approach in emphasising the development of the country's human capital and promoting integrity among the people.

"Islam Hadhari does not alter the fundamental and core values of Islam," he added.

The four-day conference is the third to be held outside Egypt, which is aimed to strengthen ties among former graduates of the prestigious Al-Azhar University