

'We must find national consensus to deal with unresolved policy-related issues'

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Malaysia has to strive to find national consensus in dealing with many unresolved policy-related issues to ensure the country will withstand the challenges of globalisation.

UN Special Envoy to Myanmar Tan Sri Razali Ismail said although the demographic variants of Malaysians might make it difficult to achieve a consensus, national unity should help Malaysians achieve it.

He said the people must understand each other's needs to ensure stability and that present as well as future leaders should keep abreast of global changes.

Razali said this in his speech titled "From Independence to the 21st Century: Approaches in Malaysia's Foreign Policies" at one of Young Professionals Chamber Malaysia's (Promuda) "Perspectives from the Past, Paradigms for the Future" lecture series.

He said the country had made some serious miscalculations in its foreign policies in the past and this had to be addressed and not repeated.

Citing cases like the strained Singapore-Malaysia relationship because of the water issue, he said leaders should be tactful and display their professionalism in handling situations that could determine the progress or downfall of the country.

Razali also urged Malaysian foreign representatives to practise proactive diplomacy in addressing international issues including foreign policies, forestry matters and other emerging problems.

"They have to hone their skills of arguing to make an impact internationally and not be on the sidelines.

"Proactive diplomacy has to be doubled and its intensity has to be like before."

On the transition of the Malaysian leadership, he said the country still required the essential pre-requisite of having a good leadership to be able to brave the challenges of globalisation.

"It is not possible any more to surrogate the responsibilities of the nation to a sole leader, but it is a task all should undertake."

To the more than 200 participants at the event, Razali said Malaysia was fortunate to have a good leader, as over the years, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had successfully led the country to a respectable height.

The event was organised by National Economic Action Council and Promuda, a society targeted at young professionals below 35, with a minimum basic degree qualification, working in the service industry or serving in an executive or management position in the private sector.

Promuda organises a regular series of monthly private dinner talks with prominent speakers from the private and public sectors, hosted by various corporate bodies.

About 70 lectures have been planned for the next three years.

Those interested to attend the lectures and view Promuda's newly-established e-magazine *Prodigy*, can visit its website at www.promuda.com.