

Chua: AIDS kills more than war or terrorism

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NEW YORK: AIDS kills more people every day than any war or terrorist action, Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng said.

Addressing the 26th special session themed "Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS" at the United Nations General Assembly here, Chua said neglecting the epidemic would only cause social and economic deprivations that could fuel the condition from which other issues may arise.

"Investment in HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support in developing countries now may well be an investment in the future that is equitable and peaceful," he said.

Chua said that Malaysia and other developing countries would continue to need support.

"We hope that the commitment made by countries of the North to support the Global Fund against AIDS, TB and malaria will be met

urgently.
"We regret that while some concerns have attracted large resources, HIV/AIDS still needs to fight for adequate attention," Chua said.

The Health Minister also spoke on steps taken by the Malaysians Government to fight the scourge.

He said that Malaysia realised that any positive action depended on strong Government commitment and in the last two years had made available US\$20.73mil for HIV/AIDS related work, of which US\$8.32mil was for HIV prevention and US\$9.81mil for clinical care and treatment.

"As about 80% of infections in Malaysia occurred among young people, aged between 20 and 35, the government placed great priority on prevention programmes for the young," he said.

Among those who attended yesterday's meeting was the Malaysian AIDS Council president Datuk Seri Marina Mahathir.