

Najib: Subsidies shouldn't be across the board
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said subsidies should be targeted and not across the board.

In the long run, he said for anything to be sustainable, subsidies should only be for the truly deserving.

"If only we understand that resources are not limitless and if we want services improved at some point, we need to pay for it," Najib said in his keynote address at the second Asia Pacific Regional Water Conference (APRWC) in Petaling Jaya today.

The keynote address was read by Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister Peter Chin Fah Kui.

"Not only do we need to push for growth in an environment of depleting resources, we must somehow manage them in a sustainable manner," said Najib.

"At the government level, we also need to provide the right signal to balance the costs and implement suitable tariff rates without burdening the rakyat," he added.

The prime minister said water cannot be treated as though it was available in unlimited quantity and supplied at zero or low cost to consumers.

"We must not forget that when we turn on the tap, what comes out is not just water but a product which has value. Although, we have plenty of water in Malaysia, clean water requires capital and investment," he said.

Najib also said the cost of water services needs to be reasonable and linked to the amount of water consumed, to encourage consumption, but the selection of a set of pricing mechanism is now somewhat difficult when it is being unnecessarily politicised.

He said if water resources are not managed in a sustainable manner, the impact will be devastating and it is quite evident in the way the global weather has been unpredictable and often violent.

As such, Malaysia he added, is pragmatic and takes the efforts on sustainability seriously.

- Bernama