

Najib unveils plan to build 'green economy'

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The government is launching an ambitious plan to build a "green economy" with the help of an advisory council that includes economist Jeffrey Sachs and the UN climate change head.

The initiative is part of economic reforms instituted by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak since taking power two years ago, aimed at pushing the country towards developed-nation status by 2020.

His administration has already promised major infrastructure projects and financial market liberalisation to attract foreign investment and boost growth, but critics say the results have been limited.

Najib on Tuesday convened the first meeting of an eminent 42-member Global Science and Innovation Advisory Council in New York to help it achieve ambitions of becoming a science and technology innovation destination.

Malaysia's vision of a "green economy" would see it moving beyond its status as a manufacturing hub, and establish "low carbon emissions, highly efficient use of resources, and a healthy, well-educated populace."

"Malaysia's ambitious goal is to simultaneously reduce poverty and achieve a green economy," Najib said in a statement from New York.

"We see science and technology innovation as key to achieving that goal, guided by the advice and active support of some of the world's most distinguished entrepreneurial, scientific and economic experts."

"These experts will liaise and work actively with key Malaysian agencies and institutions to develop 'quick wins' in the palm oil industry, in the creation of a smart city and smart village, and in education."

As well as Sachs and Rajendra Pachauri, the chairman of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the panel also includes media tycoon Steve Forbes and two Nobel laureates.

- AFP