

## **Najib: More to corruption than just gov't abuses**

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today said that if the country wanted to eradicate corruption, it should not only look at abuse of power in public offices.

Instead, he said values of society must also be taken into account in combating graft.

"If we view corruption as truly unethical and immoral behaviour, we cannot stop at just looking at public officials and politicians who abuse their powers - we must go much further than that," he said during the launch of the 6th International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities Conference in Kuala Lumpur this evening.

Najib said often times, people were only concerned about abuse of power in government and public service whenever corruption is raised.

"What is often neglected, however, is the fact that corruption and corrupt behaviour is entangled deep with the moral fabric of all societies.

"We must be able to take an unrelenting honest look at the values prevalent in our societies," he said.

Najib pointed out that in some countries where severe punishment was meted out for corruption, it has not proven entirely effective.

As such, Najib said it was necessary to cultivate social norms and values that are critical of corruption and a sense of duty.

"It is critical, therefore, people in positions of power and authority to exemplify the values they wish their constituents would follow," he said.

'Is the pursuit of profits corruption?'

Explaining further, Najib said while society demands public accountability, they endorse the pursuit of greed and unmitigated material successes.

"In other words, we forgive greed, until that greed spirals out of control and the effects reach beyond the handful of individuals perpetuating it," he said.

An example was how people had applauded the perpetrators of the global financial crisis while they raked in record profits but only condemned them after it became a crisis, he said.

"Is the unbridled and ruthless pursuit of extraordinary profits a form of corruption?"

"I believe that if we see corruption as fundamentally a moral problem, therefore anything that promotes selfish interest at the expense of the well-being of others is morally wrong," he said.

He added that it was vapid self interest and greed that was truly at the heart of corruption.

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