

PM: People suffering from imbalanced global progress

MalaysiaKini.com

Sept 28th, 2015

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As world leaders adopted the United Nations agenda for sustainable development over the next 15 years at a summit in New York, Malaysia expressed concern on the uneven global progress with millions of people still suffering.

"Even today, around 800 million people still live in poverty and suffer from hunger," Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said at the Agenda 2030 Summit today (yesterday in New York).

Najib said although the target of halving the extreme poverty rate had been met, the world was still far from reaching the overall goal of eradicating poverty and hunger.

"This, then, must remain at the core of the post-2015 development agenda – and it is imperative that it is one that leaves no one behind," he said.

Najib said millions of people were still suffering because of their gender, age, disability, ethnicity or geographic location.

Also known as the Global Goals, the agenda contains 17 goals and 169 targets, focusing on three elements - economic growth, social inclusion and environment protection.

The agenda was adopted last Saturday (Friday in New York), at the opening of the three-day summit meeting, with more than 150 heads of state and government attending the 70th session of the UN General Assembly.

Poverty in Malaysia only at 0.6 percent

Among others, it aimed at eradicating hunger and extreme poverty, reducing inequality, achieving gender equality, as well as taking serious action to fight climate change.

Malaysia, said Najib, was committed to the Post-2015 agenda in transforming the world by 2030, as inclusivity and sustainable development had long been at the centre of the country's transformation from a developing country to one that was on achieving high income status by 2020.

He said the incidence of poverty in Malaysia was reduced from 49.3 percent in 1970 to 0.6 percent in 2014, while hardcore poverty had been eradicated.

"By 2020, we aim to double the average income for the B40 (bottom 40 percent) households, from US\$700 in 2014 to US\$1,500, elevating them into the middle-class," he said.

Najib also said that the participation of women in the workforce would be increased, while rural areas would be transformed by improving connectivity and mobility, as well as creating a more business-friendly environment.

- Bernama

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