

M'sia moots UN convention on nuclear security
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Stepping up its role as a responsible global citizen, Malaysia on Tuesday pledged its support for a nuclear weapon free world and proposed the establishment of a United Nations convention on nuclear security.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak told a gathering of leaders from 47 countries, including host United States, attending the historic Nuclear Security Summit that in addressing the threat of nuclear terrorism, the underlying causes of terrorism too must be looked at.

"In this regard, we believe that moving the Middle East peace process forward and managing the failed states are also important," he said.

Underlining that nuclear energy should only be deployed for peaceful use, Najib urged all countries to exercise full transparency in their nuclear programmes and to adhere to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) provisions.

"In our capacity as the current chairman of the IAEA Board of Governors, Malaysia will do its utmost to ensure that those principles are respected and promoted," he stressed.

US President Barack Obama convened the summit to seek global support to rein in loose nuclear materials within four years to keep them beyond the reach of terrorist groups.

Najib called on the international community to strengthen the capacity of individual countries to maintain effective control and undertake pre-emptive actions to ensure nuclear security.

This would include cooperation in capacity building, timely exchange and sharing of information, high quality intelligences and adoption of best practices.

The gathering got a quick brief from Najib of Malaysia's Strategic Trade Bill, passed recently to enforce control over the export, transit and brokering of arms and related material which may be used to develop nuclear weapon and weapons of mass destruction.

Najib said violators would be severely punished and Malaysia was ready to share its experience in crafting the legislation with other countries.

In a media conference with Malaysian journalists after the two-day summit, Najib said although Malaysia did not have any dangerous nuclear material, it could be used as a route by third countries.

If nuclear material fell into the hands of terrorists, both within and outside the country, Malaysia's interest would also be affected due to the impact on the world economy.

The Middle East situation must also be addressed in the disarmament efforts, said Najib.

"If you can eliminate legitimate grievances, then you reduce potential terrorists and this has connection to the Middle East process, it is still key to our efforts to eliminate terrorism," he said.

On his proposal for a UN convention on nuclear security, Najib said it would legally mandate and strengthen the IAEA to promote and ensure nuclear security universally as the existing IAEA terms of reference only mentioned nuclear safety but not nuclear security.

The prime minister said that with the expansion of the use of nuclear power to meet low carbon emissions to fight global warming, it was very important for the world to cooperate so that nuclear material did not fall into the hands of terrorists.

He said the summit made several resolutions for countries to adopt best practices in the control of nuclear material and information on processing nuclear material to further tighten and reduce opportunities for nuclear material to fall into the hands of inappropriate parties.

The countries attending the summit also agreed to increase contributions to the IAEA fund so that it could play a more effective role in terms of technical assistance and verification.

Details on the increase were being worked out and there was a possibility that countries which did not attend the summit would also contribute.

Najib said Obama's vision of a world without nuclear weapons was supported by all countries at the summit.

Although the mission would take a long time, the first step had been taken with the signing of an agreement between the US and Russia last week to reduce their respective nuclear weapons stockpiles.

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