

PM: Use technology to tackle climate change

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KUALA LUMPUR: Technology is the key to helping Asian oil companies ease climate change, the prime minister said yesterday.

Repeatedly stressing the problems of global warming, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said improvements in technology would not only boost oil companies' competitiveness, but also reduce the environmental impact of the energy industry.

"This would include improving the energy efficiency of industrial processes, as well as reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Developments in alternative energy sources are also very promising.

"Such developments would help enhance security of supply, as well as address deep environmental concerns," Abdullah told participants of the 12th annual Asia Oil & Gas Conference in his opening speech.

Touching on the conference theme of "A Shared Future", Abdullah said there was now a sense of urgency needing quick and decisive action to address climate change.

The three-day conference, held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, will focus on the need to ensure a safe, reliable and sustainable energy future for countries' common benefit.

Abdullah said improving the fuel economy of light-duty vehicle fleets and reducing emissions from coal-fired power plants must be priorities.

Sound urban planning and research into new technologies were also needed, he added, as well as a "greater emphasis on incentives, rather than penalties" to spur investments and compliance with carbon emission limitations.

He also urged industry leaders and players to contribute to policy discussions in the pursuit of emissions reduction.

"Industry leaders cannot dele-

gate or shirk this responsibility.

"I believe that when industry participants display the necessary corporate social responsibility in tackling the issue of climate change, only then can any realistic progress be made."

Asia accounts for an increasingly larger share of the global demand for energy, with developing Asia expected to overtake North America as the single largest market for energy.

Speaking about Asia's challenges in the industry, Abdullah said energy security was a highly charged concern with much of the region's oil and gas supply flowing from politically volatile areas such as West Asia.

Technology could help enhance energy security, he said, with sophisticated technology allowing the industry to develop previously uneconomic and unconventional resources such as oil sands, heavy oil and oil shale.

He also said the industry was adjusting to the growing maturity

of national oil companies, as they undertake more complex projects on their own or through ventures with others.

The prime minister at this juncture expressed delight over Petronas' inclusion in *Financial Times'* new "Seven Sisters" list of the most influential energy companies from countries outside the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

"I am proud to note that Petronas has been included in this distinguished list," he said.

He said for national oil companies and multinationals to move forward, they needed to find new ways to strike meaningful and mutually beneficial tie-ups on a long-term basis.

They would also need to plan human capital development up to 2030, he said, so that the Asian workforce would be ready to meet the challenges and opportunities of that era.

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