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Abdullah: Don't take climate change lightly

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MALAYSIA objected to earlier moves to introduce a new framework to address climate change issues at the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) forum but acknowledged that the subject cannot be ignored.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said although a watered-down Sydney Declaration will be issued on climate change at the end of the Apec leaders summit, no country in the world should take the issue lightly.

Australia had earlier wanted to push for target dates to be included in the Sydney Declaration on climate change but encountered strong opposition from developing nations such as China and Malaysia who felt that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adequate to address the issue.

Speaking at a news conference, Abdullah said climate change was a global issue and no country



could say it had the right to conduct whatever activities, no matter how damaging they were to the environment, as long as they were within its borders.

"Sometimes the impact of such environment-damaging activities are felt by those outside of their borders."

Outside of introducing new frameworks, he said it was good that a forum such as Apec discussed climate change since the 21-member grouping has in it both developing and developed economies.

"We agree that the emission of greenhouse gases must be reduced."

Abdullah also hoped that all the economies in Apec would participate in the forthcoming UNFCCC convention which will be held in Bali in December.

Apec leaders eventually adopted the Sydney Declaration, which among others, stated that they will work through bilateral, regional and global partnerships to promote clean development.

They also recognised that the UN climate change process is the appropriate multilateral forum for international negotiations on climate change.

The leaders also managed to widen certain definitions in the earlier draft declaration which otherwise would make certain developing nations commit more.

The definitions of forest, for instance, was widened to mean all types of forests when earlier it was understood to encompass only those in the tropical region.

Abdullah said Apec leaders also

discussed the need to explore new and renewable energy resources.

"I am all for technology and we should continue to explore clean and renewable energy resources."

On trade, Abdullah said Apec leaders agreed that the World Trade Organisation Doha Round talks must resume and be concluded as soon as possible. "It has stalled for quite some time."

Yesterday, Abdullah also had a meeting with Mexican President Fillipe Calderon where both discussed ways to increase trade and investments. Mexico is Malaysia's second largest trading partner in Latin America and the ninth largest in the world.

Calderon also expressed Mexico's interest in exploring business opportunities in liquified natural gas with Petronas and in palm oil with the Palm Oil Research Institute of Malaysia.