

# 'NEW TECHNOLOGIES VITAL TO ACHIEVE SDGs'

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Accelerated progress needed to fulfil targets by 2030, says Dr M

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**D**IGITAL technology will play a critical role in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) although innovation will most likely affect progress in positive and negative ways, said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said the deployment of new technologies was essential in achieving the SDGs, considering the need for accelerated progress to fulfil the goals by 2030.

"At the same time, as new technologies are usually unavailable to marginalised populations, it will be a key challenge to ensure that no one is left behind, as new innovations often exacerbate existing divides in society between those who can benefit and those who are left behind.

"With the speed of innovation, many opportunities and risks are unknown but could rapidly crystallise, without regulators being able to respond in a timely manner.

"Hence, a mindful approach towards the Fourth Industrial Revolution is necessary," he said at the opening of the Malaysia SDG Summit at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre here yesterday.

Present were Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Azmin Ali, his deputy Mohd Radzi Md Jidin and United Nations Resident Coordinator for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Stefan Priesner.

Dr Mahathir said in fulfilling its SDGs, there would be challenges faced by Malaysia and other nations.

Chief among the major global concerns over the last few decades, he said, was climate change.

Other concerns, he said, were the degradation of forest, marine and freshwater resources, in-

crease in hydro-meteorological and geomorphological events, the decline in food production capacities and other environmentally driven economic systems and climate change's ethical-justice issues such as environmentally induced displacements and migration, the deprivation and sustenance of certain livelihood activities, and the safety and well-being of the more marginalised sectors of society.

"It is therefore crucial that we find the right balance between growth and measures needed to address climate change, environmental degradation and sustainable use of Malaysia's natural endowment," said Dr Mahathir.

He reiterated Malaysia's commitment to institutionalising the SDGs within its Shared Prosperity Vision 2030.

"Since gaining Independence in 1957, Malaysia has consistently taken into account the economic, social and environmental aspects in our development plans."

Moving forward with the SDGs, Dr Mahathir said, Malaysia recognised the social complexity of resolving sustainable development problems that would require co-ordinated action by a range of stakeholders.

"This will include government agencies at different levels of the government, non-profit organisations, the private sector, academia, organised civil society and individuals."

He said Malaysia had put in place an institutional framework to facilitate the operationalisation of the SDGs at all levels.

"Efforts will continue to be taken to ensure coordinated action involving all sectors of society."

Dr Mahathir said in line with the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030, Malaysia would focus on governance reforms based on two core principles, namely integrity and good governance.

"The principles of integrity and good governance will be applied across six identified sectors, including political governance, public sector administration, public procurement, legal and judicial, law enforcement and corporate governance.

"This is expected to result in favourable outcomes such as strengthening accountability and integrity, elevating the credibility of the legal system in tandem with social changes and improving the people's perception and trust towards public administration and institutions."

He said to achieve the ambitious global SDGs, which include ending poverty, improving global health, ensuring universal education and mitigating climate change by 2030, would require a substantial amount of funding.

"The expected financial burden is beyond the capacity of the government, and cannot be met by official development assistance. The role of the private sector, as well as updated financial markets, will be essential."