

'VACCINE MUST BE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL NATIONS, PEOPLES'

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Covid-19 does not discriminate, our response should not too, PM tells UNGA virtual meeting

KUALA LUMPUR

A VACCINE for Covid-19, once it is found, must be accessible to all nations and peoples, said Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

Delivering Malaysia's national statement at the high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations (UN), he said there should not be any discrimination whatsoever in that aspect.

"We must remember that since Covid-19 does not discriminate, our response should not too."

Muhyiddin said the deadly virus had taken so many lives and exposed the true capacity and effectiveness of healthcare systems. The socio-economic impact had been just as severe, he added.

This was Muhyiddin's maiden address to a high-level meeting of the UN since taking over as prime minister in March.

The meeting was held virtually because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the statement was pre-recorded at his office in Putrajaya.

Muhyiddin also called on the UN to be improved and reformed as many people were still suffering due to conflicts, which re-



Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin delivering the national statement at the high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, in Putrajaya yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

mained unresolved in various parts of the world.

He said the UN had somewhat failed to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

"The United Nations remains the only global institution that all of us can claim ownership.

"While we acknowledge that the organisation has done quite well in many areas in its 75 years of existence, especially in promoting social and economic development, we need to be honest and recognise that the UN has somewhat failed to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war."

Many people, he said, were suffering due to conflicts, which remained unresolved in various parts of the world.

"The United Nations is needed

now more than ever. However, the organisation needs to be better equipped — not just with political latitude, but with the continued support of its member states to respond to some of the most glaring problems the world is facing."

Muhyiddin also expressed Malaysia's concern over the actions of certain countries that disregarded agreements and instruments initiated under the UN.

"Earlier this year, the United Nations launched the UN75 initiative, inviting people around the world to share their aspirations, hopes and priorities for the future.

"Nearly 40,000 people responded to the UN75 survey within the first three months of its launch. While the interpretation of the findings may differ

according to respective national circumstances, the message and direction that our people have shared are clear.

"This is not to say that the international community has not paid attention to those issues. On the contrary, we have worked especially hard on them over the years. The Paris Agreement, for example, was a milestone achieved by nations in combating climate change — a culmination of international efforts that began at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992.

"We also have a host of instruments and conventions on human rights, most of which took many years to formulate. Such instruments govern and regulate our actions in order to allow all of us to progress.

"Unfortunately, in recent years, we have seen that certain countries disregarded such agreements. We hope that this stops. We must take heed of what our people want and hope for."

Seventy-five years since its existence, Muhyiddin said, the time was right for the UN to take stock of its achievements, improve on its weaknesses and remove all obstacles that prevented its continued progress.

"Malaysia welcomes the adoption of the Declaration for the Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations today (yesterday).

"We sincerely believe that today's commemoration presents a golden opportunity for the international community to do better. Let us not miss this opportunity. Let us move forward together in building the future we want and the United Nations we need."

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