

# PM FOCUSES ON WORLD FAMILY AT UN

NST - 26/9/2021 pg. 6

Nations must ensure collaboration beyond the Covid-19 pandemic, says Ismail Sabri

ADIB POVERA  
KUALA LUMPUR  
news@nst.com.my

**M**ALAYSIA has called on the international community to work together under a more unified and effective unit, which Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob called the “world family”, to address the increasing global health threats.

Ismail Sabri yesterday said nations must ensure greater collaboration in not only ending the Covid-19 pandemic, but also on other health-related issues.

These, he said, could be undertaken by expanding their public health capacity, particularly by boosting access to technology and knowledge.

“We need to regard public health as a global public good rather than the exclusive domain of individual nations.

“It is because of this that Malaysia will play a more prominent role and participate more actively in health diplomacy, and our approach will be more interdisciplinary in nature and involve more relevant stakeholders.

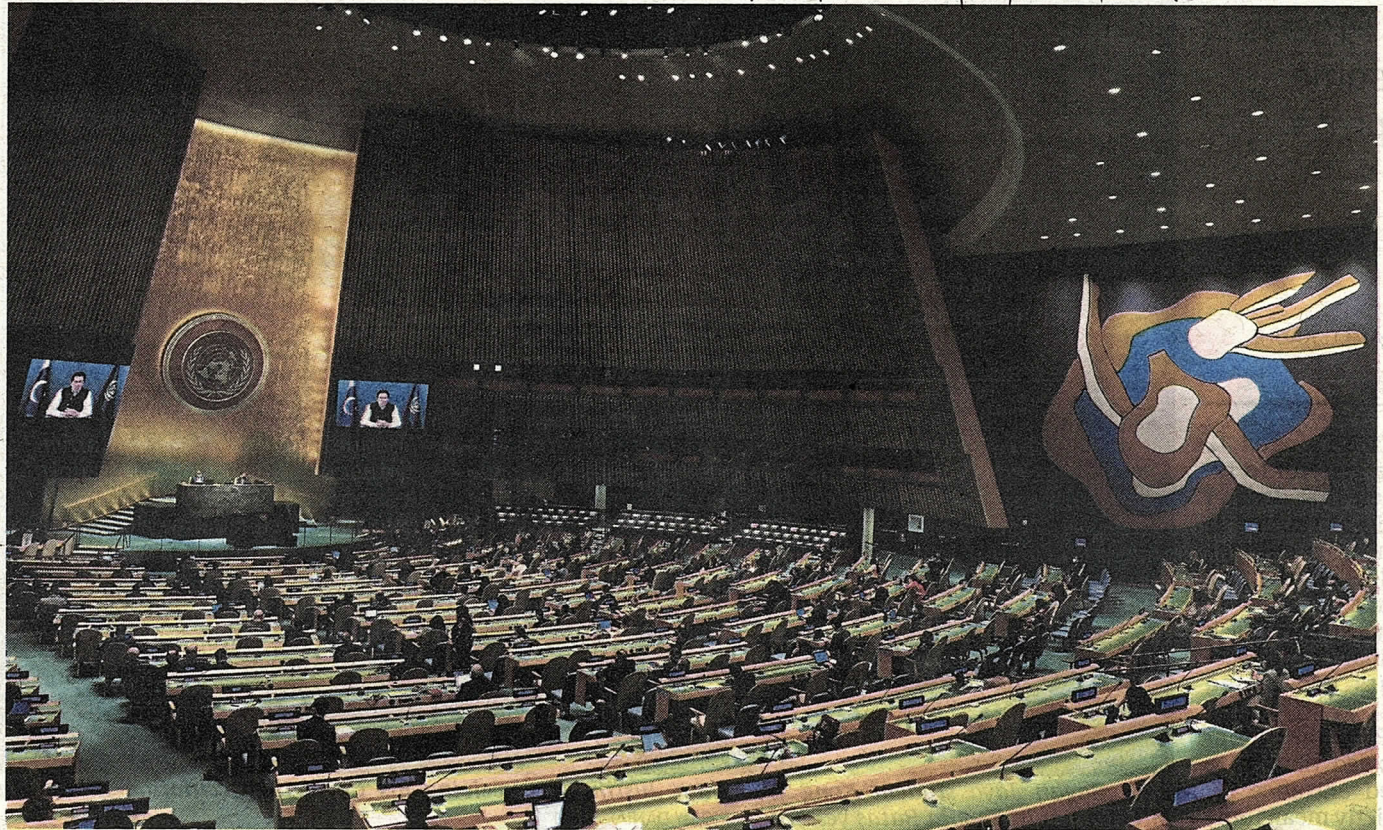
“As for Covid-19, we cannot afford to wait for an even deadlier variant to emerge and claim more lives. We need to act now,” he said in his inaugural speech at the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York.

He delivered Malaysia’s national statement via a pre-recorded video.

The pandemic, he said, had amplified existing inequalities and uncertainties, making it difficult for member nations to achieve the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

He said Malaysia’s economy, like the rest of the world, had not been spared as the country’s growth domestic product (GDP) had contracted by 5.6 per cent last year, making it the worst decline in over 20 years since the Asian financial crisis.

Malaysia, however, was making steady progress in weathering the economic impact unleashed with the health crisis as the result of the pandemic, he said.



The 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly taking place at the UN headquarters in New York on Friday. EPA PIC

The country, Ismail Sabri said, took a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach in addressing this unprecedented crisis, including rolling out many economic stimulus packages worth US\$130 billion, or 36 per cent of the nation’s GDP.

“Malaysia also introduced the National Recovery Plan as the nation’s exit strategy from the pandemic.

“This includes speeding up vaccination rates, which stand at more than 500,000 doses daily in recent weeks.

“It also includes re-opening key economic sectors to revive the economy.

“We are pleased that these efforts, as well as our pursuit of attaining the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, were commended during our Voluntary National Review in July.”

He stressed the need for peaceful coexistence and global cease-fires among nations.

Malaysia, he said, was a firm proponent of multilateralism and peaceful coexistence, which are mutually reinforcing.

“Respect and mutual understanding must be the backbone and essence in our interactions and discourse. We believe that diversity can be a powerful source of strength and resilience.

“Thus, we need to take a deeper look at the many qualities that make up our family of nations.

“It is no longer enough that we tolerate differences, but we should, instead, learn to celebrate and treat them with genuine curiosity and meaningful respect.

“Amid the global uncertainties, it is time for us to strengthen our efforts towards living together in peace and harmony.”

In this regard, he said, Malaysia supported the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they would never be produced again.

He said the development and deployment of nuclear weapons continued to be a threat to mankind.

“Towards this end, Malaysia welcomes the coming into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons earlier this

year.

“Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and as chair of Main Committee One (1) on Nuclear Disarmament for the 10th NPT Review Conference, we will strive towards bringing state parties together and do our best to steer deliberations towards a fruitful outcome,” he said.

He touched on issues belea-

guing Palestine, the situation in Afghanistan as well as the Rohingya in Myanmar.

Malaysia, he said, had and would continue to lend its unwavering support and solidarity to the Palestinians.

“The systematic oppression of Palestinians over many years through discriminatory policies, denial of basic civil rights, imposition of harsh conditions, large-scale land confiscation, and inhumane acts committed against them are tantamount to the crime of apartheid.

“Malaysia stresses again that Israel must be held responsible and accountable for all its wrongdoings, including its flagrant violations of international law.”

In Afghanistan, he said Malaysia condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

“The world family must come together to support Afghanistan in this time of need, including by extending humanitarian assistance to the people,” he said, adding that Malaysia stood ready to extend its help and do what it could.

As for the situation in Myanmar and the Rohingya issue, he said there was a need for a peaceful solution to be found, especially with a multitude of challenges besetting the country.

“Malaysia is particularly worried about the humanitarian situation, now aggravated by Myanmar’s healthcare system, which is stretched thin. It is absolutely

essential for aid to reach those in need.

“Asean member states have taken steps to engage key parties of this conflict to extend assistance where possible.

“Malaysia fully supports the work of the Asean chair’s special envoy on Myanmar.

“However, we remain concerned that the authorities have yet to allow Asean’s special envoy to visit the country.

“We urge the authorities to accept the visit and assist the special envoy in his duties as well as expedite the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus.”

At the end of his speech, he highlighted the need for the revitalisation of the General Assembly and the reform of the Security Council.

“The UN has been in existence for over 75 years.

“In that time, the world has changed significantly. As such, the UN must keep pace with a rapidly changing world as it continues to face a crisis of expectations.

“Reform is necessary to strengthen the UN’s effectiveness as a multilateral organisation, to bring more transparency to it and to enhance its credibility.

“On this, we must work together to reform the organisation and we hope member states will demonstrate openness, flexibility, and political will in the interest of international peace, security, and prosperity.”



Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob