

Ismail Sabri calls for peaceful coexistence at UNGA

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The PM highlights more effective health diplomacy engagement to ensure greater collaboration not just to end the pandemic but on an array of other health-related issues

by HARIZAH KAMEL

PRIME Minister (PM) Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob has called for peaceful coexistence and a global ceasefire during his debut address at the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

He said Malaysia remains a strong proponent of multilateralism and will continue to uphold its fundamental principles of defending its sovereignty and interest, maintaining good relations including promoting tolerance, mutual respect and understanding among all peoples.

"As a member state of Asean, Malaysia is committed to preserving Asean region as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality.

"Malaysia also reaffirms its commitment towards global peace, security and prosperity by continuing to lead on the issuance of a Joint Communique on global ceasefire in June this year," he said.

On the message of nations working together in the spirit of a "world family" to address the deep-rooted challenges of inequality, political instability and global governance, he highlighted on more effective health diplomacy engagement to ensure greater collaboration not just to end the Covid-19 pandemic but on an array of other health-related issues.

These include expanding the nations' public health capacity, particularly by



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enhancing their access to relevant technology and knowledge.

"We truly need to regard public health as a global public good rather than the exclusive domain of individual nations," he said.

He noted that rebuilding lives and economies after the pandemic will not come easy, adding that challenges are even greater for countries that are more vulnerable to natural disasters.

The PM renewed his call for climate action and encouraged developed countries to take responsibility by providing financial resources and technology transfer to the

developing world to undertake sustainable initiatives, in line with the equity principle of "common but differentiated responsibility".

Also in his UNGA speech, Ismail Sabri expressed the importance of nuclear disarmament and finds it disheartening that billions of dollars are being spent to maintain and modernise nuclear weapons, rather than on saving lives and livelihoods.

"Malaysia supports the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again. This is the only guarantee against the catastrophic consequences arising from their use.

"Towards this end, Malaysia welcomes the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which came into force earlier this year," he said.

Inevitably, he called attention to the crises in the Muslim world, particularly on the Rohingya issue in Myanmar, the Palestinian issue and the situation in Afghanistan.

Ismail Sabri said a peaceful solution is needed in Myanmar and urged the country's authorities to allow the entry of Asean's Special Envoy to expedite the implementation of the "Five-Point Consensus".

Speaking on the repeated violations and aggressions by Israeli forces and settlers that are equivalent to the crime of apartheid against Palestinians, he stressed that Israel must be held responsible and accountable for all its wrongdoings including its flagrant violations of international law.

On Afghanistan, he said Malaysia condemns terrorism in all forms and manifestations and that the region cannot be allowed to be turned into a fertile breeding ground for terrorism again.

"The world family must come together to support Afghanistan in this time of need, including by extending humanitarian assistance to the people.

"On this, Malaysia stands ready to extend its assistance and do what it can," he said.

Furthermore, he suggested that a 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," he added.