

# Anwar: All must benefit

'Technological advances should reach urban and remote folks'

**Charting new heights:** Anwar (centre) at the closing ceremony of the Malaysia ICT Summit 2023 at Mitec in Kuala Lumpur. Also attending were Communications and Digital Minister Fahmi Fadzil (third from left), Deputy Communications and Digital Minister Teo Nie Ching (second from left) and Huawei (Asia-Pacific) president Simon Lin Baifeng (third from right).  
— Bernama



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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia's technological transformation, including the rollout of the 5G network infrastructure, will not be sustainable if it does not provide equal benefit to all of the public, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said the implementation of such technological change must be fair and bring benefit to all, not just certain segments of the society.

"To me, in the Madani philosophy, it cannot be sustainable if we look purely in terms of technological change, or transformation, without care, concern and compassion.

"That's why our 5G network makes it abundantly clear that it's just not a matter of technology, but it's a matter of ensuring that every single citizen in this country is given the same opportunity," he said in his speech at the closing ceremony of the Malaysia ICT Summit 2023 at the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre (Mitec) yesterday.

He explained that such a transformation of access and connectivity should benefit even those in the remote areas of the country, such as Sabah and Sarawak.

"From the urban squatters and urban poor to the remotest area in Sabah or Sarawak, they must be given that opportunity, access and connectivity. Otherwise, it is not sustainable," added Anwar.

He also said a switch to having a dual 5G network would allow for more effective participation by China's Huawei, providing the nation with a balance of both Western and Eastern technologies.

In May, the government said it would allow a second 5G network to operate next year to break a monopoly held by a single state-run network, despite concerns from some Western countries that wanted Malaysia to stick to its original plan.

"We in Malaysia ... and I believe rightly, decided that while we get the best from the West, we also should benefit from the East.

"After extensive discussion, we made the decision to allow for a dual network, and thus the decision for more effective participation by Huawei," added Anwar.

He also said the government had embarked on several major initiatives to boost transformation, including the national digital strategy, but at the same time, it required a new mindset and attitude as well as preparedness for such changes.

"And the pace must also change. We cannot just talk about digital transformation

but also touch on how to ease doing business," said the Prime Minister, adding that he had reiterated the same message during yesterday's Cabinet meeting.

"And thank God, when I was in New York recently, you could sense the enthusiasm and recognition from the potential investors to Malaysia.

"But we will have to respond accordingly, not only through digital transformation but to make sure that there is ease of doing business," said Anwar, who is also the Finance Minister.

He said it was important to have clarity in all of the government's policies, which were clearly stressed in the Madani economy frameworks and plans.

"Even in our 12th Malaysia Plan mid-term review (12MP MTR), there was actually a departure from a traditional notion of thinking within a five-year plan to something that is adjusted according to the needs of the time," stressed Anwar.

He said he would be tabling the Malaysia Madani Budget in Parliament next month.

"And I believe the issues I have raised here will be taken into consideration so that we can improve the Madani Budget," he said.

Anwar is expected to table the Budget 2024 in Parliament on Oct 13.