

Malaysia Proposes WEO To Anchor Global Efforts For Environment
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 12 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has today proposed to the United Nations (UN) to create World Environment Organisation (WEO), to anchor global efforts for the environment.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the proposed environmental body should be consultative and facilitative to assist countries to meet the commitments derived from mutual agreements.

He said only with a major overhaul of the governance system would the world be able to address the challenges of environmental sustainability.

"It has become virtually impossible for developing countries to participate meaningfully. The only countries that cope with the system are the richest countries of the world while the developing nations are becoming disenfranchised.

"A new body like the WEO can help facilitate the participation of developing countries in a more realistic and meaningful way," he said in his speech at the First Preparatory Meeting of the World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability, here, today.

Najib's speech text was read out by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz.

The prime minister said that over the years, the international community had adopted hundreds of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), all with their own secretariats and administration.

Between 1992 to 2007, the 18 major MEAs alone convened some 540 meetings which produced over 5,000 decisions that countries were supposed to act upon through national efforts, he added.

Najib said the World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability in Brazil on June 4 to 6, next year, would provide a timely opportunity to examine contemporary norms and principles of justice, governance and law in the area of environmental sustainability and the inherent linkages among them.

He said the congress would further provide an opportunity to decide on steps for the evolution and implementation of these norms and principles, which would in turn provide a way forward for addressing the sustainability challenges of the 21st century.

Najib said the participants of the preparatory meeting would also have the opportunity to send clear messages on how they could move forward on international environmental governance at all levels by bringing a new perspective to the debate.

"This preparatory meeting is particularly important because it will give the chance to lay the foundations for the deliberations at the World Congress.

"The World Congress is a unique opportunity to engage in the Rio+20 debates on governance and to become an active participant, especially for developing countries, with proposals matching our needs for development," he added.

Director of the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Bakary Kante, said Najib's proposal towards environmental sustainability was a giant step forward for the global environment.

"This is the first time a leader is stating an advance position to call for WEO. The prime minister has understood how environment is important for the future of this country and the world," he said in welcoming the statement made by Najib.

"On behalf of the UN, we express our deepest gratitude to the prime minister (for the statement made)," he added.

The 34 participants of the two-day meeting which ends tomorrow, comprise judges and legal experts from 19 countries who exchange views, knowledge and experience related to the implementation of environmental law.

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