

Najib: Engage youths for a better tomorrow
The Star Online
05 December, 2012
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JOHOR BARU: Muslim countries should engage with their growing youth population and give them a meaningful stake in society to safeguard against disenfranchisement and extremism.

[Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak](#) said that governments should see youth as an asset which if managed properly, could lay the foundation for greater success.

"By focusing on economic and political reform, governments could present a compelling vision of a future defined by opportunity and not dependency.

"Young people want freedom of opportunity. They want world-class education and the freedom to pursue the options they bring, including being active in the new digital spaces.

"They want strong democratic institutions with open and accountable governments. They want to play their part in civil society to build a better nation," he said in his keynote address at the 8th World Islamic Economic Forum with the theme, Changing Trends, New Opportunities, here yesterday.

Najib added that the challenges for governments was to deliver these freedoms without sacrificing tradition, stability or growth.

Najib outlined seven strategies to engage Muslim youths which would require both leadership and reform.

Among them are vocational and technical training, building a more dynamic private sector to boost Muslim countries' share of world trade and pursue structural reforms including ensuring Muslim economies could compete in industries of the future.

Others include recalibrating the way governments communicate with young people, seizing opportunities in the digital economy, encouraging moderation and investing in young people including women.

He stressed that as a developing country, Malaysia has faced some hard choices and had improved its public services delivery system and provided new opportunities to meet the growing expectations of the people.

Najib noted that developing Muslim countries were at the receiving end of policy decisions with little or no power to influence the global economic agenda.

"Islam is no barrier to economic development as Islamic states are capable not just of economic dynamism but financial innovation," he said

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