

**Need To Tackle Intolerance Based On Religion, Beliefs - Malaysia's UN Envoy  
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 14 (Bernama) -- Malaysia feels that the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations' (UNAOC) strategic plan for 2013-2018 should accentuate the need to combat all forms of discrimination, intolerance, negative stereotyping and violence based on a person's religion or beliefs.

Malaysia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN) in New York Datuk Hussein Haniff said there had been one too many instances of irresponsible people vilifying and defaming certain religious groups.

"This has resulted in tragic consequences," he said in a statement at the UNAOC Groups of Friends Meeting at the permanent representatives' level on Monday.

The envoy said Malaysia also believed it was important for the Alliance to focus on socio-economic development programmes targetting the disenfranchised and under-developed areas.

"The Alliance would need to address social injustices that could lead to clashes between various ethnic and religious groups," he said.

In complementing the on-going activities with the UNAOC, Hussein highlighted that Malaysia had called for the creation of the 'Global Movement of Moderates' (GMM) to counter extremism in all forms.

"In this regard, Malaysia believes that the strategic plan should include a means to engage the people in cultivating peace and moderation, and provide sustainable resolution to all conflicts and crises," he said.

He also welcomed the recent signing of the Plan of Action for 2013-2015 between the GMM Foundation and the Alliance, which would pave the way for greater cooperation in promoting moderation and respect between religions, civilisations and cultures.

Both organisations, noted Hussein, should have regular consultations to develop and carry out concrete and pragmatic programmes.

"For a start, such programmes could focus on youths and students so that they would be exposed to the concept of moderation which, in turn, would assist in bridging cultural and religious divides in the communities they live in," he added.

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