

Najib Urges APEC Science Advisors To Share Expertise To Tackle Haze
Bernama
Oct 15, 2015

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 15 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has urged science advisors of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) members to share expertise and ideas to overcome the seasonal haze affecting Southeast Asian countries.

He said Malaysia had suffered from the situation for the past 18 years and there was a need to come up with better solutions to the problem.

"I hope the science advisors can advise how we can cope and prevent the (use of) slash-and-burn (agricultural) technique, how to prevent peat soil fire, whether it's deliberate or due to climate change.

"So, I'm very interested to know about your findings and advice," Najib said at the opening of the Third Meeting of the APEC Economies' Chief Science Advisors and Equivalents here today.

Among those in the audience were Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh, Science Advisor to the prime minister Prof Tan Sri Zakri Abdul Hamid and Sir Peter Gluckman, who is Chief Science Advisor to the New Zealand prime minister.

Najib said their advice and recommendations would likely be raised during the ASEAN summit and APEC meeting scheduled for next month for further discussion.

His keynote address at the two-day meeting carried the theme of 'Building Foundations for Scientific Advice Towards Inclusive Economies for a Better World'.

The prime minister noted that many of the defining challenges of the 21st century - most notably climate change, food and water security, energy, poverty alleviation and health - had scientific dimensions of increasing complexity.

"They can't be solved by one country alone," he said, adding that science diplomacy and cooperation were important tools with which mutual understanding could be promoted and international relations improved.

Najib pointed out the fact that any government would require technological and scientific advice, and this was further amplified in times of crisis and emergencies.

Citing the search for missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 as an example, he said the mission involved an unprecedented level of international scientific and military cooperation, with 26 countries extending assistance.

"Malaysia is of course indebted to the leading role of the Australian government in the complex and challenging exercise but no less significant is the Chinese government's

ongoing support and resources dedicated to the search efforts," he said.

He said that severe flooding that hit the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia last year and more recently the Sabah earthquake pointed to the need for scientific and technological response to deal with natural disasters.

"Evidently, science and technology has played and will continue to play a prominent role in future climate change-related disaster risk reduction," he said.

Najib reckoned that assessments of hazards - their magnitude, timelines and estimated costs - and the technologies or techniques required to prevent or mitigate impacts would be critical to informed decision-making.

"It's imperative, therefore, that those in charge of providing advice to governments must be armed with knowledge of the latest scientific developments in various fields.

"They must have access to the best minds in science and technology to form collaborations and seek opinions when necessary. I believe this is a critical part of putting together an advisory perspective that can be affectively utilised by governments, especially in times of crisis," he said.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2015 BERNAMA

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/newsindex.php?id=1179952>