

## **Asia Should Promote Common Development, Prosperity - Najib**

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**By Mohd Haikal Mohd Isa**

BANGKOK, Oct 10 (Bernama) -- Asia should promote common development, prosperity and resist "interference from outside powers," said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak here today.

The era of old empires, he said, had long gone and Asians insisted its cultures, laws and sovereignty be respected by all.

"If this is to be the Asian century - and I believe it is - we must stand tall and seize control of our own destiny. Our peoples and our countries are stepping up to the challenge of leadership as the centre of global gravity shifts to the east - to Asia," he said.

The Prime Minister made the statement during the plenary session of the Second Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Summit, which was held at the Thai Foreign Ministry here, today.

Thai Prime Minister Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha had earlier opened the summit, themed "One Asia, Diverse Strength".

Najib also said, it was imperative that the 34-member states of ACD were more united so that it could be the driving force for global economic growth.

This is in view of the present difficult economic condition faced by the region.

He said the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its 2016 World Economic Outlook projected the global growth to expand by 3.1 per cent this year and 3.4 per cent in 2017, underscoring the need for enhance policy coordination among countries.

"It is imperative that ACD member states are more united and work collaboratively, so that Asia can fulfil its potential as the major driving force for global economic growth," said Najib.

The ACD countries, he believed, were not capitalising on what it could do as an organisation and urged them to focus on specific programmes that would yield quick and tangible outcomes.

Malaysia according to him, had the relevant experience with the National Transformation Programme which has nearly doubled the gross national income, created 1.8 million jobs and nearly eradicated poverty.

The Prime Minister said the country supported the ACD pillar on education and human resource development, reaffirming Malaysia's commitment to developing the Asia e University (AeU).

Since establishing operation in 2008 the AeU, which was the brainchild of Malaysia, had enrolled around 2,350 international students from 60 countries and established partnerships in 25 countries,

he said.

In concluding his remark, he called on the ACD to ensure its future is marked by cooperation, interdependence, sharing, caring and complementarity.

"We can attain this, if we show the necessary political will and work collectively for the good of all. I'm sure that all present have the determination to do so," added Najib.

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