

Negative claims against palm oil 'baseless', says Najib
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Prime Minister says Malaysia and Indonesia, through the Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries, will convince those boycotting that the negative claims against palm oil are totally baseless.

KUALA SELANGOR: Malaysia and Indonesia will retaliate against countries, including the European Union (EU), which boycott palm oil, says Prime Minister Najib Razak.

Najib said he had discussed with Indonesian President Joko Widodo during the recent Asean Summit in Manila that Malaysia and Indonesia, through the Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries (CPOPC), would convince those countries that the negative claims against palm oil were totally baseless.

"We must tell them (countries that are boycotting palm oil) that Malaysia and Indonesia are not countries that do not have capabilities, we also buy many products from them.

"Whoever is boycotting palm oil is likely to face retaliation from Malaysia and Indonesia," he said in his speech when launching the 100-year celebration of the National Oil Industry at the Tennamaram Plantation in Bestari Jaya here today.

Najib also outlined five transformation shifts, including the introduction of the Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil Scheme (MSPO), which must be carried out to ensure that the future of the palm oil industry is more outstanding in the coming 100 years.

"Today, the national oil palm industry is faced with many challenges, accusations and negative perceptions from several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on the supposedly unsustainable development of oil palm crops, polluting the environment and causing deforestation in our country.

"Therefore to address this issue, in particular allegations on the issue of sustainability, the government has taken proactive steps by introducing MSPO, which will be made mandatory from Dec 31, 2019. It will also take care of the interests of the oil palm industry and our exports to developed countries," he said.

In addition, the prime minister said investments are needed for research, development and commercialisation to support the development of the oil industry.

He said there was a need to strengthen human capital development, targeting more professionals to venture into the field of oil palm and provision of funds for new planting of oil palms and replanting schemes.

“So in front of more than 5,000 attendees this evening, I am pleased to announce an additional allocation of RM510 million for smallholders’ oil palm replanting scheme and new smallholders oil palm planting scheme for a period of three years.

“For 2017, the government approves an additional allocation of RM130 million as requested by the ministry of plantation industries and commodities,” he said.

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