

Malaysia, Indonesia agree to counter Europe's anti-palm oil campaign

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29/06/2018

JAKARTA, June 29 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Indonesia, the world's biggest producers of palm oil, have agreed to counter the anti-palm oil campaign in Europe.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the two countries needed to cooperate to hit back at the European smear campaign.

"Palm oil exports to Europe are under threat and we should work together to counter the argument that oil palm cultivation led to deforestation and a major impact on the climate and environment," he said at a joint media conference with Indonesian President Joko Widodo at the presidential palace, Istana Bogor.

The European Union (EU) seeks to phase out palm oil from transport fuel. However, earlier this month the EU lawmakers agreed to defer the ban to 2030 from 2021.

According to Dr Mahathir, Europe's opposition is viewed as more economics-related rather than due to the alleged environmental impact of oil palm cultivation.

He said it was Europe that actually no longer had many forest-covered areas as most of the trees had been cut down.

"However, when we require a larger area to cultivate oil palm, they oppose it," he added.

Meanwhile, Jokowi asked Malaysia to consider Indonesia's request to develop schools for children of Indonesian workers in Peninsular Malaysia as well as Sabah and Sarawak.

He also touched on the need for close cooperation between the two neighbours to resolve

border issues and discuss joint car production.

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Source: <http://www.bernama.com/en/news.php?id=1475773>