

Muhyiddin wants NAM to help smaller nations in war against COVID-19

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Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin deliver his speech during the Online Summit Level Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Contact Group in Response to COVID-19 at Perdana Putra today. Meeting chaired by Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev, the NAM chairman for the 2019-2022 term.

PUTRAJAYA, May 4 -- Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin tonight called on the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to help smaller nations in the war against COVID-19.

Malaysia, he said, believes that NAM must play a more significant role to champion access and acquisition for smaller nations in obtaining medical supplies, medications and vaccine once they are developed.

He noted that Malaysia's concern was that if NAM is not united, smaller nations would be sidelined when medication and vaccine are developed by pharmaceutical giants in advanced nations.

"We must strongly condemn the declaration and application of unilateral coercive measures against NAM member states, especially while the world is facing this

unprecedented pandemic," he said during the Online Summit Level Meeting of the NAM Contact Group via video-conferencing from here.

The online summit was chaired by Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev, as the current chair of NAM for the 2019-2022 term. The theme of the summit was "United against the COVID-19", to promote international solidarity in the fight against the pandemic.

"We are not alone in this war against an invisible enemy. All of us have been and will continue to be affected by COVID-19. This pandemic requires collective strength and solidarity as we are only as strong as our weakest link," Muhyiddin said.

The prime minister said Malaysia welcomes the establishment of the NAM Task Force, which would create a common database for basic medical needs as well as identify social and humanitarian requirements of the movement's member states.

"Malaysia also welcomes Azerbaijan's initiative to promote the values of multilateralism through this Online Summit," he said.

NAM represents 120 nations; 17 states and 10 global organisations as observers. Collectively, the movement makes up nearly two-thirds of the United Nations' members and leads 55 per cent, more than half, of the world population.

Muhyiddin said: "If COVID-19 has proven anything to us as non-aligned nations, is that this pandemic has levelled the playing field in the world.

"Some smaller nations are just as strong, if not better, than bigger nations in handling this novel coronavirus."

Muhyiddin said this is the time for NAM as non-aligned nations to come together and prove that by staying united, cohesive and steadfast, NAM can prove to the world that it can overcome this pandemic and emerge as a major force in the new global order post COVID-19.

On Malaysia's efforts , Muhyiddin said the government has put in place a six-step plan in addressing the impacts COVID-19 has had on the country, and to ensure Malaysia emerges stronger from the ravages of Covid-19.

"First was the resolve to break the chain of infections and impose a Movement Control Order (MCO) on our people. Since the implementation on 18 March, we have seen positive impacts – with lower new cases recorded daily, an increasing recovery rate combined with a low mortality rate of only 1.7 percent," he said.

Secondly, Muhyiddin said the government has focused on ensuring the resilience of the economy.

"Due to external factors such as a slowdown in global trade, combined with supply and demand shocks; and internal factors, such as decreased spending from the MCO - we pushed through three economic stimulus packages to support our people's incomes during the MCO, and implement measures aimed to kickstart the economy once restrictions are lifted," he said.

He said today (May 4) Malaysia has embarked on the third step of the plan which is a widescale restart of the national economy in a controlled and orderly manner.

" Although most of our economic sectors have reopened today, those involving close human contact and mass gatherings are still prohibited," he said.

The prime minister further explained that this was the balancing act Malaysia was trying to achieve, between kickstarting the economy, and the importance of adhering to new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to prevent another wave of infections amongst the population.

However, he said the reopening of the country's economic sectors must not be mistaken for a complete lifting of the MCO, and it was still in place until May 12.

Subsequently, he said it would be the implementation of an economic recovery strategy in facing this 'new normal', followed by an all-inclusive economic revitalization and finally a structural economic reform in facing a new global landscape post COVID-19.

"The success of these six 'R's I have mentioned today – resolve, resilience, restart, recovery, revitalize, and reform – will greatly depend on the strength of our people in facing this 'new normal'," he said.

"Things will never be the same again, and we must try our level best to return our nations to some semblance of normalcy.

"Life must go on, but this can only be achieved if we come together globally to get the medication to treat and the vaccine to prevent this deadly novel coronavirus," he added.

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