

## **Strong bond between small states may help countries face geopolitical uncertainty**



***The bond will help the states getting their voices heard and getting equal treatment globally***

**by NURUL SUHAIDI / pic BERNAMA**

**IN FACING** the current global issues and geopolitical tension, small states should form a stronger collaboration to get its voice heard and be treated equally at the global level.

Based on the Commonwealth definition, the small states are generally countries with a population of 2.5 million people or less which constitutes an integral part of the international order.

New Zealand Foreign Affairs Minister Nanaia Mahuta (*picture*) said in the increasing uncertainty, risky geo-security environment and economic pressure, it's really important that the states intensify their engagement and coordinate it across the foreign policy spectrum.

"This is because the issue cannot be responded to with force or sheer size, it requires global collective responsibility and our existence depends on it," she said during the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations' (IDFR) lecture series 2/22 on foreign policy for small states at IDFR Kuala Lumpur.

According to her, given the big power's ability to exert its influence through its economic, political and military strength, their opinions also must be taken into account in achieving the diplomacy objectives.

Mahuta suggested that the states can emphasise their strengths and unique attributes to operate diplomatically and get their voice heard internationally.

"However, it also requires other tools or skills that require communication, understanding, dialogue and diplomacy," she noted.

Highlighting Malaysia's uniqueness, such as the diversity of peoples, she believes the country has a natural ability to move easily between different cultures.

"In this matter, Malaysia is able to interpret and explain what is happening in one world to those from another world," she said.

In the future, Mahuta is optimistic that Malaysia and New Zealand can set a powerful demonstration of how small states can work together bilaterally, regionally and globally.

“This is because today, Malaysia is one of New Zealand’s closest defence partners in the region and our defence ties are even older.”

She believes that having a neighbour who is also a close friend is also more essential than ever for the security and wellbeing of the citizens of both nations.

“Not only that, but we also need trusted friends who share our commitment to multilateralism and working together to address shared challenges.

“New Zealand together with Malaysia and others will continue to uphold the rules and norms that have served us so well, and ensure that our region remains peaceful, open, prosperous and sustainable,” she said.

“Lastly, in diplomacy, the people are the best asset as the world changes, therefore small states also should prioritise investing in its people while upholding their clear principle, values and priority.

“It is important to be clear about who we are, what we stand for, and what we want to achieve so we can reflect the outcomes based on our principles and priorities,” she concluded.

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