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## Malaysia And ASEAN Should Play More Proactive Role In Advocating Urgent UN Reform – UNAM

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By Wan Muhammad Aslah Wan Razali

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 12 (Bernama) -- The United Nations Association of Malaysia (UNAM) has called on Malaysia, together with ASEAN, to play a more proactive role in advocating for urgent reform of the United Nations (UN), in response to mounting global challenges and questions over the organisation's credibility.

UNAM President, Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, said Malaysia's principled foreign policy and longstanding advocacy for justice and international law, particularly its consistent support for the Palestinian cause, has strengthened its standing to champion reform within the global body.

“We commend the Government of Malaysia for its strong, principled, and consistent support for the Palestinian cause.

“This unwavering stance reflects our national commitment to justice and international law,” he said at a forum event, co-organised with the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR) here on Tuesday.

He said the forum marked the third collaboration between UNAM and IDFR, following the United Nations Day celebration last year and a forum and debate in February.

Mustapa said Malaysia’s position on Palestine was further highlighted by recent international developments, with the United Kingdom (UK), France, and, most recently, Palestine itself, moving towards formal recognition of a Palestinian state.

He expressed concern over the erosion of trust in multilateral institutions and the UN at a time when global cooperation is more critical than ever.

He said the credibility and effectiveness of the UN are being questioned, adding that Malaysia, together with ASEAN, should take a proactive role in advocating for urgent reform of the organisation.

He reaffirmed Malaysia’s commitment to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and called for reforms that reflect today’s global realities.

Mustapa also highlighted Malaysia’s diplomatic role within ASEAN, including its recent success in brokering an agreement between Cambodia and Thailand on a ceasefire mechanism, a mediation effort seen as unique in the ASEAN context.

“This was achieved despite pressures from major powers such as China and the United States (US), but the conflicting parties welcomed the ASEAN platform for dialogue,” he said.

Meanwhile, in summarising the forum discussion on the topic “The United Nations and Multilateralism”, guest speakers, including Universiti Sains Malaysia’s (USM) Prof Emeritus Dr Johan Saravanamuttu and Malaysia’s Foreign Ministry representative and UNAM Council Member, Prisheela Prakas Raw, shared their views on multilateralism in the global order.

Sharing his views, Johan said that despite its flaws, the United Nations remains the most comprehensive and universal platform for addressing pressing global challenges.

He added that, as the phrase “TINA”—short for *There Is No Alternative*—suggests, the UN remains indispensable.

He emphasised that alongside the UN, there must be parallel efforts by states, middle powers, small powers, and other multilateral arrangements in various regions to help achieve the goals enshrined in the UN Charter, including ending the scourge of war, promoting social justice, and ensuring a fairer distribution of global resources.

Agreeing with Johan’s views, Prisheela stressed that the UN remains the most representative multilateral platform, with 193 member states, and expressed hope that the admission of Palestine would bring the number to 194.

“The challenge we face now is to build trust in the system, and we must persistently work towards that.

“The reform agenda is just one means to an end, to ensure that the UN is fit for purpose, remains true to its cause, and adapts to the current realities,” she said.

The discussion was moderated by IDFR’s Competency Enhancement Centre (CEC) Director, Datuk Westmoreland Edward Palon, and attended by diplomats, academicians, international relations experts, government officials, as well as participants of the Diplomatic Training Course for ASEAN Attachment Officers and the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme: Economic Diplomacy Course.

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