

Malaysia 'exemplary' in fighting poverty, says UN chief

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Ban delivers his address at the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations in Kuala Lumpur on March 22, 2012. — Picture by Choo Choy May

KUALA LUMPUR, March 22 — Malaysia is an exemplary model country in the fight against poverty, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said today.

"In sustainable development, Malaysia has made great strides to reduce poverty," he said in his address on "Malaysia and the United Nations in a Changing World" here.

Calling Malaysia an "exemplary model country", Ban hoped the government would share its experience in combating poverty with other developing countries.

"This is a chance for Malaysia to assume leadership," he added.

Ban also praised the Najib administration for setting up a Parliamentary Select Committee on electoral reforms as well as repealing the Internal Security Act (ISA), which he described as "of great importance" to human rights.

"The bipartisan Parliamentary Select Committee on electoral reforms is commendable. I hope it takes into account all legitimate concerns by stakeholders," he said.

"I also hope it (the committee) is transparent (when implementing electoral reforms). The UN stands ready to help Malaysia in this endeavour," he added.

Brandishing his 1 Malaysia lapel pin proudly, Ban said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's vision of "strength through diversity" was a "very good and important concept".

"Malaysia is diverse, but is aiming for unity," he said.

"This is the core value of the UN, to try to promote unity among all diversities; among all 193 member states.

"That is why we commend 1 Malaysia," he added.

Ban also said the UN's five priorities were "five generational opportunities" in sustainable development.

"We need to work together to prevent man-made crises. We must strive to save the human population from natural disasters, and make the world a more peaceful place," he explained, adding that UN member countries should unite in "helping countries in transition such as Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen and Syria".

"Lastly, we must work with women and youth, who have contributed largely to the historic transformation of many countries in recent years."