

'Govts need new policies to resolve crises'

KUALA LUMPUR: Governing a nation is getting more complicated now and this requires governments to undergo transformation to cope with natural disasters.

Institute of Strategic and International Studies Malaysia chief executive Datuk Dr Mahani Zainal Abidin said the negative impact that arose from natural disasters and how they forced governments to change their policies were lessons that needed to be learnt.

"International cooperation to learn about each nation's experience in the face of natural disasters will help other countries when faced with a similar challenge," said Mahani during a plenary session at the international forum on "The Politics of Economic and Social Transformation in the Era of Global Crisis" here yesterday. The forum was attended by representatives of 29 political parties from 25 countries, including Iraq, Japan, Cambodia Indonesia, Turkey, Vietnam and China.

Gaku Kato, the vice director-general of the Democratic Party of Japan's International Department, said the government was drafting a policy to look into new sources of renewable energy following the tsunami which hit the country in March.

"Four reactors lost its cooling functions. It is the worst nuclear accident in 25 years."

Kato said the government allocated about 12 trillion yen (RM493.8 billion) for disaster control efforts. He said the disaster created a ripple effect on the livelihood of the people, which prompted new policies to be drafted in the agriculture and fisheries sectors.

"It is time for a transformation. Japan is facing its worst crisis since World War 2."

Another panellist, Cambodia's Funcinpec Party president, Keo Puth Reasmey, said his country had switched from a profit-driven economy to one of socio-economic interests to meet changing trends due to globalisation.

"It's time to have a new discourse in the economic or social context, instead of the economic context."

Former foreign affairs minister, Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar touched on how the government listened to the people and implemented reforms.

"Malaysia is transforming from the top-down. This can be seen in the abolishment of the Internal Security Act and amendments to the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971."