

International experts aid Malaysia's growth drive

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is firmly on the path to developed nation status, thanks to valuable insights from the Global Science and Innovation Advisory Council (GSIAC), which serves as a "kitchen cabinet" to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

GSIAC comprises 17 distinguished international leaders in the fields of economy, business, science and technology, and 21 national members and 13 ex-officio members from Malaysia.

GSIAC is complemented by ministers with portfolios related to science, technology and innovation (STI) and industry captains.

Run by the Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology, the council is mandated with helping the country achieve US\$15,000 (RM60,442) per capita gross domestic product, which is the threshold for developed-country status, by 2020.

GSIAC secretary Professor Tan Sri Zakri Abdul Hamid said it advised the prime minister on what could be obtained from the outside world in terms of new industries and jobs.

He said the GSIAC meeting in London today would focus on fostering the wellbeing of Malaysians in the new world economy, characterised by new industries and jobs.

Two main topics will be on the agenda. The first will deliberate on the positioning of Malaysia as a

competitive, sustainable and innovative nation. It will be moderated by Professor Alice P. Gast, president of Imperial College London.

The second is sustainable job creation and wealth generation, to be moderated by Professor Datuk Dr Noor Azlan Ghazali, an external member to Bank Negara Malaysia's Monetary Policy Committee and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia vice-chancellor.

"In our pursuit to create more economic opportunities, we must also take care of the need to be sustainable, not only financially, but also from the point of view of the environment and natural resources," said Zakri.

He said development needed to be inclusive, and must include the needs of the Bottom 40 group.

"The prime minister will deliver a distinguished lecture on the theme of 'Global Competitiveness, Malaysia's Aspirations', in which he will discuss Malaysia's successes with programmes that had been initiated since introducing the New Economic Model in 2009, and the Pemandu (Performance Management Delivery Unit) report card, in which Najib will outline the country's economic milestones.

"He will also touch on the fact that though we are pursuing this economic aspiration, we will still be balanced in our approach," he told the *New Straits Times*.