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Accelerating progress on SDGs in Malaysia

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Six transformations needed, says Jeffrey Sachs

## ECONOMY

PETALING JAYA: Six big transformations are needed to accelerate the progress of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Malaysia.

Professor Jeffrey Sachs, who is an SDG advocate for the United Nations (UN), suggested governments have 25 to 30-year plans as a pathway to get an idea of where society should be and how to get there in that horizon in meeting the SDG goals.

Sachs believes that Agenda 2030, a key mission towards sustainable development, needs to be manageable.

Sachs, who was speaking at "A Conversation with Professor Jeffrey Sachs" event here yesterday, talked about the six big transformations that start with quality education for all, adding that everybody should learn the essence of sustainable development in the world.

The second transformation is quality health for all. "Health that is not just about an emerging infectious disease, but about environmental health and health of ecosystems that support human health," he said.

The third transformation, energy and industrial transformation relates to zero carbon energy. He said there was nothing wrong with coal, and oil and gas, as intrinsically, they are not immoral.

"They made the modern world, but they just happened by accidental quantum mechanics to absorb infrared radiation and

***"Digital transformation in our era is path-breaking technology that can change so much for the good."***

Professor Jeffrey Sachs

therefore have a greenhouse effect," he added.

He believes there is an engineering challenge to provide energy that cannot be emitting carbon dioxide for eight billion people.

The next transformation is sustainable land use, he said, adding that a price was needed for the destruction of biodiversity.

The fifth transformation is sustainable cities. "Cities have always been determined by how far you can move in 30 minutes, it turns out," he said.

Automobile cities were built in the 20th Century, but automobiles are the major barrier to sustainability, according to him.

He said there would be more people moving to the cities as agriculture is going to be mechanised very quickly.

The final transformation that was highlighted by Sachs was digital transformation.

"Digital transformation in our era is path-breaking technology that can change so much for the good," he said.

In September 2015, leaders of the world gathered at a special UN summit and agreed

to adopt Agenda 2030 and commit to 17 SDGs.

These SDGs come with over 100 targets which act as a set of solutions for the biggest problems that the world is facing.

The UN has been working to formulate and push towards the sustainable development agenda ever since the "Earth Summit" at Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

According to Sachs, the SDG list started with over 300 goals as different governments acted as one committee of the UN and pitched a proposal on the goals.

The list was then brought down to 17 goals.

Sachs is impressed by the number of governments that have adopted SDG in their planning mechanisms.

According to UN resident coordinator for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam, Karima El Korri, meanwhile, there has been significant progress on many targets in Malaysia.

She said the Malaysian government's emergency plan has enabled swift and decisive action to protect lives and livelihoods in line with Agenda 2030.