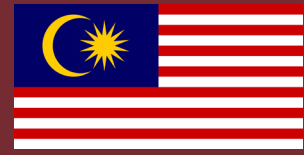


# RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN MALAYSIA



On behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia, I extend our warmest congratulations to the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) and its 15 esteemed Member States. We are deeply honoured to celebrate the declaration of July 6th as World Rural Development Day, an initiative led by CIRDAP that rightfully acknowledges the contributions and resilience of rural communities worldwide. This date holds particular significance for Malaysia, as CIRDAP was established through an agreement adopted in Kuala Lumpur on 29 July 1978, making this milestone a point of shared pride.

Over the years, CIRDAP has played a pivotal role in advancing rural development across the Asia-Pacific region. It has served as a dynamic platform for knowledge exchange, capacity building, and dissemination of best practices in integrated rural development (IRD). Through its diverse portfolio of training programmes, collaborative research, policy dialogues, and model initiatives, CIRDAP has empowered Member States to strengthen rural development frameworks, enhance institutional capacities, and adopt innovative solutions tailored to local challenges. These collective efforts have significantly improved the lives of millions in rural communities, fostered regional solidarity, and supported the implementation of impactful, people-centred development strategies.

For Malaysia, rural development has been a cornerstone of national progress since our independence in 1957. Our journey began with transformative initiatives such as the establishment of the Federal Land Development

Authority (FELDA), which pioneered land settlement schemes that lifted thousands out of poverty and created a new generation of landowners. This early momentum was further strengthened under the New Economic Policy (1971–1990), which targeted poverty reduction and bridged rural–urban disparities. Today, Malaysia enjoys rural electrification coverage of 98.27% and clean water access at 97.04%—a testament to decades of sustained investment in rural infrastructure and social equity.

Building on this foundation, we now embrace a forward-looking approach through our Rural Development Policy 2030, which envisions rural areas as prosperous, inclusive, sustainable, and holistic communities. Under the national MADANI framework, Malaysia is driving transformative programmes that revitalise rural economies, strengthen food security, and nurture resilient communities. These include the Village Integrated Economic Development Project (PROSPEK), which empowers villages to build self-sustaining economic ecosystems, and Projek Rakan Kebun SKoD, a community-based farming initiative aimed at promoting food self-sufficiency and reducing living costs. Our Desa Lestari (Sustainable Village) programme



supports holistic community development by leveraging local leadership and assets to foster vibrant and self-reliant villages.

Central to our efforts is the development of human capital. The Department of Community Development (KEMAS) plays a vital role through its extensive preschool network of over 10,000 centres and by championing lifelong learning and community programmes. We are also investing heavily in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and fast-tracking digital transformation in rural areas—equipping entrepreneurs with skills in e-commerce, digital marketing, and online business to ensure their meaningful participation in the global economy.

As we commemorate this inaugural World Rural Development Day, Malaysia's rural development journey reflects an evolution from foundational infrastructure building to the creation of dynamic, empowered, and sustainable rural communities. We remain committed to sharing our experiences, learning from our regional partners, and working together to build a more equitable and prosperous rural future across the Asia-Pacific.

Thank you.

**H.E. DATO' SERI  
DR. AHMAD ZAHID HAMIDI**

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Rural  
and Regional Development of Malaysia

