



YOUTH CALL TO ACTION MALAYSIA

Transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs for a sustainable future for young people in all their diversity.

Situational Analysis

Aligned with the Thirteenth Malaysia Plan (2026-2030) and Ekonomi MADANI, Malaysia is on track to achieve 43% of its SDG targets. However, structural inequalities persist. To secure a sustainable future, we must radically accelerate progress across Human Development (SDGs 3 & 5), Critical Infrastructure (SDGs 6, 7, 9 & 11), and Governance (SDG 17), moving beyond aggregate success to address the specific vulnerabilities of the youth demographic.

On the human development front, despite milestones like a lowered maternal mortality ratio (25.7 per 100,000) and increased female labour participation (56.8%), crises persist. Rural childhood stunting has paradoxically risen to 23.8% amid development, and urgent mental health threats demand decentralised interventions. Furthermore, the absence of a comprehensive care economy continues to obstruct young women from long-term workforce retention, neutralising educational gains.

Economically, youth face a volatile transition. While the National Energy Transition Roadmap (NETR) targets 31% renewable capacity, subsidy rationalisation has spiked living costs. Premature deindustrialisation has pushed graduate unemployment to 17.6%, while low R&D spending (1.0% of GDP) stifles digital innovation. In urban centers, unaffordable housing and poor connectivity entrap youth, while climate resilience is failing, evidenced by a five-fold increase in disaster-affected persons between 2020 and 2021.

To address these gaps, governance must evolve. While initiatives like OpenDOSM and APPGM-SDG have improved transparency, data on marginalised and undocumented youth remains fragmented. Safeguarding the 2030 Agenda requires moving beyond ad-hoc consultation to institutionalised youth decision-making, ensuring national policy is not just responsive, but co-created by the generation that will inherit it.

Co-convended by



In collaboration



In partnership



RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations for Malaysia on selected SDGs to achieve the optimum target are as follows :

SDG 6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

- » We urge the government to upgrade water systems in rural areas to ensure households have access to clean water.
- » Improve data transparency by publishing an annual water data collection from each state and supporting research in policy-driven studies.
- » Adopt a long-term National Rural Water Security Programme to guarantee safe water access in Sabah, Sarawak, and Orang Asli settlements through climate-resilient infrastructure.
- » Ensure stricter and more stringent enforcement of industrial wastewater regulations, including the deployment of real-time digital river monitoring systems and public transparency dashboards, in partnership with the Department of Environment Malaysia.

SDG 7: AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

- » We demand that the new Solar ATAP framework includes mechanisms to remain accessible and equitable for youth-led SMEs and lower-income households, particularly noting the shift to the System Marginal Price (SMP) for non-domestic users.
- » Promote gradual rationalisation of fossil fuel subsidies and the redirection of savings toward renewable energy deployment under the National Energy Transition Roadmap.
- » Expand Net Energy Metering and community solar adoption nationwide, including schools, SMEs, and public housing, with safety oversight aligned to International Atomic Energy Agency standards where nuclear feasibility is studied.

SDG 9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- » We urge that the government power up rural schools with IoT/robotics to equip the students

with accessibility tech for innovation.

- » Mandate Artificial Intelligence (AI) impact assessment (usage of AI, use of data, etc) for public sector AI deployments, as well as mandating AI transparency on algorithms for government-based systems.
- » Ensure that the investments in digital infrastructure and efforts to close the digital divide are matched with mandatory digital and AI literacy education and robust platform regulation. Digital development must integrate access, skills, and protection to enable safe, inclusive, and responsible innovation for all.

SDG 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

- » We urge the government and local authorities to develop and implement a comprehensive, interoperable urban mobility data platform that regularly collects and publishes transport coverage and accessibility metrics to guide expansion of public transport services, address inadequate network coverage, and reduce over-reliance on private vehicles.
- » We urge the government and city councils to plan cities for intergenerational resilience by institutionalising youth participation in urban governance while adapting infrastructure and services for an ageing population. Inclusive urban planning must integrate age-friendly housing, accessible transport, and community spaces that enable interaction, care, and mutual support across generations.
- » We call upon the Ministry of Higher Education to transform public universities into Living Laboratories for the circular economy. This includes institutionalising disruptive behavioral models, such as the systemic elimination of traditional general waste bins, to enforce mandatory recycling and sustainable daily habits among the youth demographic.

SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

- » We push for the establishment of an Integrated National SDG Data and Action Framework to dismantle siloed working groups. The Government must consolidate fragmented data into a unified, open-access repository, expanding platforms like OpenDOSM, and enforce cross-sectoral collaboration, ensuring ministries, youth councils, and civil society co-create policies together rather than duplicating efforts.
- » Institutionalise open data and statistical capacity building by publishing a comprehensive, disaggregated SDG progress dashboard for the public, ensuring data is broken down by gender, age, ethnicity, disability status, and geography, enabling evidence-based policymaking and public accountability in partnership with the Department of Statistics Malaysia and UNDP.
- » Expand corporate sustainability accountability by requiring all publicly listed companies and government-linked corporations to adopt mandatory Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) reporting aligned with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), with oversight by the Securities Commission Malaysia and Bursa Malaysia.

SDG 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- » We urge the expansion of equitable healthcare access through mobile clinics, telemedicine, and preventive NCD screening programmes prioritising B40, rural, indigenous, refugee, and stateless communities.
- » Support the formal accreditation and integration of 'Peer Support Specialists' into the public healthcare workforce as paid co-workers alongside clinicians. Moving beyond isolated NGO efforts, the Ministry of Health must institutionalise a 'Shared Care' ecosystem

where peer support bridges the critical gap between clinical psychiatry and community recovery.

- » We urge the Ministry of Education to resolve the 'trust gap' in school counselling by implementing a three-tier clinical triage model. By introducing cluster-based clinical psychologists alongside a centralised District Psychiatrist, we can separate behavioral guidance from clinical diagnosis, ensuring students receive specialised, privacy-compliant early interventions.

SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY

- » We demand the unequivocal standardisation of the minimum marriage age to 18 years old across all Civil, Syariah, and Customary legal frameworks, with zero exceptions. To actualise SDG Target 5.3, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development must table a transparent progress report on the National Strategy Plan in Handling the Causes of Child Marriage, holding all state jurisdictions accountable for dismantling this systemic violation.
- » Integrate evidence-based Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) into the national curriculum to combat teenage pregnancies. Furthermore, the Government must fulfill UNFPA's 'three zeros' commitment by ensuring that essential Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services, including contraception, are legally protected, destigmatised, and universally accessible to all youth, regardless of marital status.
- » Urgently enact specific Gender Equality Act to close penal code loopholes and criminalise all forms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), including marital rape. Concurrently, expand the funding and reach of One-Stop Crisis Centres (OSCCs) in public hospitals, ensuring seamless medical, psychological, and legal protection for every survivor.

The APFSD country and sub-regional briefs were developed through collective discussions and engagements between youth advocates at the APFSD Youth Forum in Bangkok on 18-20 February, 2026. The Malaysia country

brief was drafted by Azman 'Azhim Roslan with contributions from members of Malaysian Youth Diplomacy. Overall supervision was provided by the ARROW Call To Action team.