

Malaysia have room for improvement in SDG, PM says

With full alignment implemented in the govt's annual budget, Malaysia can identify gaps in funding to achieve the aspirations of SDG

by NUR HANANI AZMAN

THERE is room for improvement in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) involving environmental sustainability, wellbeing of vulnerable group and hardcore poor despite Malaysia has made great progress significant in the development of SDG covering a wide range aspect.

Prime Minister (PM) Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said with full alignment implemented in the government's annual budget, Malaysia can now identify gaps in funding to achieve the aspirations of the country's SDG.

He believed the Malaysia SDG Trust Fund (MySDG Trust Fund) and MySDG Foundation launched yesterday will be able to fill this gap, and help accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

"The nexus of all policies and plans to address unsustainable development issues that could affect the environment, this was



Ismail Sabri says the govt has allocated RM20m as an initial contribution to the MySDG Trust Fund and the allocation is part of Malaysia's 5-year national development plans to achieve the SDGs in the medium- and long-term

also to prevent any future recurrence of natural disasters, such as massive floods that hit the country recently.

"The floods should be a lesson for all parties to balance between the development and the need to protect and conserve the environment. Should we neglect this balance, the impact would be very significant — as we have gone through recently — or could be even worse. This supersedes any measurable financial value," he said.

As announced in the Budget 2021, the government has allocated a total of RM20 million as initial contribution to the MySDG Trust Fund. The allocation is part of Malaysia's five-year national development plans, which provides the overarching policy framework for Malaysia to achieve the SDGs in the medium- and long- term.

In the immediate term, the trust fund will be geared towards funding projects to build back better from the Covid-19 pandemic

and towards the preservation of Malaysia's natural environment and its biodiversity.

Subsequently, the scope of programmes and projects under this fund will be expanded for other SDG-related projects. Ultimately, all these initiatives will complement the government's efforts to revive the economy and develop the rakyat's sustainable wellbeing.

Once the donor mechanism is established by the MySDG Foundation, parties within and outside Malaysia can begin contributing to the trust fund. All contributions will receive a full tax exemption of up to 10% of the donor's aggregate income.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Abdul Aziz said the MySDG Foundation and MySDG Trust Fund will be a platform for better coordination of grants from various sources.

He said various funds had been set up and managed by stakeholders to address issues pertaining to poverty eradication, wildlife welfare, and environmental and biodiversity conservation.

"However, the funds could not sustain due to financial constraints to facilitate the implementation of long-term programmes and projects.

"Thus, there is an urgent need to ensure a more coordinated and integrated fund management to finance programmes and projects in the country that are likely to be outside the scope of the government's annual allocation," he said.

The finance ministry had also taken several additional steps to achieve the SDGs, including issuing the world's first sovereign Sustainability Sukuk in US dollars last April with a subscription surplus of 6.4 times, with the issue size increased from US\$1 billion (RM4.2 billion) to US\$1.3 billion.

He said the high demand had also resulted in a very competitive rate of yield or return, as well as global recognition.

Tengku Zafrul said the use of the Government Green Procurement (GGP) method since 2013 has been increased to support the use of environmentally-friendly products and services

"The GGP had involved 26 ministries in 2020 with an estimated value of RM590 million and the government would continue to expand this initiative, as well as improve guidelines to improve public sector green initiatives," he said.