

WTISD 2023: Empowering the community through information and digital technologies in Malaysia

Message from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

THE importance of digital technology has become even more apparent in recent years as it has transformed almost every aspect of modern life. Digital technology has revolutionised the world we live in and has transformed the way we communicate, conduct our business and access information. In conjunction with the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) 2023, Malaysia adopts the celebratory themed "Empowering the Community through Information and Digital Technologies", we take this opportunity to celebrate the power of information and communication technologies in our society. The celebration of WTISD takes place every year on May 17th, which commemorates the establishment of the

International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in 1865 and the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention. This celebration has been observed since 1969.

Malaysia's commitment to digitalisation is evident through its implementation of various initiatives aimed at promoting the growth of the digital economy and empowering its community. Furthermore, Malaysia's recent victory in securing the ITU Council seat for the term 2023-2026 serves as a testament to its dedication to ensuring the highest level of development in telecommunications and ICT for the nation. Malaysia's digital economy is forecast to contribute 25.5% to the gross domestic product (GDP) and create half a million jobs by 2025. As we work towards achieving Malaysia's digital economy strategy, we recognise the crucial role the National Digital Network Plan (JENDELA) plays in

ensuring that all Malaysians have access to high-speed internet connectivity. As of December 31, 2022, Jendela, which was launched in September 2020, has achieved 96.92% connectivity coverage. The initiative aims to provide Internet coverage in populated areas and aims to achieve 100% coverage by the end of 2025. However, to ensure that all Malaysians can benefit from the opportunities presented by the digital economy, we call all stakeholders to expedite their efforts to ensure connectivity for the remaining 3% of populated areas in Malaysia.

Under the on-going 5G initiative which targeted 80% Coverage of Populated Areas (CoPA) by end 2023, the Malaysian Government will continue to ensure that telecommunication services are provided at the highest quality and most affordable price. This is to make sure that no one will be deprived of access to telecommunication and internet services, which is a basic need in today's connected world.

The government is committed to ensure that all Malaysians, regardless of their socioeconomic background or geographic location, have access to digital technologies. Initiatives such as *Pusat Ekonomi Digital* (PEDi) aims to empower underserved communities with access to connectivity, digital skills and online business knowledge. As of December 2022, there are 911 PEDi accessible to many communities across the coun-

try, with over 25,980 PEDi entrepreneurs successfully undergoing training and workshops. Our goal now is to ensure that there is at least one PEDi facility in every state constituency (1 DUN, 1 PEDi).

We also place great emphasis on providing communities with access to digital technologies and the skills needed to use them effectively, and accelerate social and economic development. This includes improving education, healthcare and economic opportunities, all of which can have a significant impact on people's lives.

With the remaining 3% connectivity coverage to go, we acknowledge the coverage challenges in rural and remote areas. To address this issue, we have deployed innovative technology solutions. One such solution is the provisioning of Broadband Wireless Access (BWA) services via satellite. This has been implemented at 839 remote locations in Sabah, Sarawak as well as Orang Asli settlements in Peninsular Malaysia.

Under the vision of digital transformation and as telecommunication technology advances, communities will have better access to digital platforms and solutions that help increase worker productivity and enable enterprises and businesses across to innovate. The digital connectivity will serve as the backbone to support a full range of business use cases, including those that require next generation technology. To prepare for this future, it is crucial to ensure that the communications and multimedia industry in Malaysia is ready to provide seamless connectivity to all Malaysians.

WTISD holds special significance for the telecommunications industry and technology partners, who have tirelessly worked to empower communities across the country and propel it to new heights. It is with great appreciation that we acknowledge their unwavering efforts in advancing connectivity and communication, and their pivotal role in shaping our digital landscape. Let us work together to achieve our shared vision of a digitally connected Malaysia that benefits the people and the country.

To this end, Malaysia remains resolute in its commitment to empower the community towards technology innovation and digital transformation, to catalyse the growth of the digital economy through providing communication network access, knowledge and information sharing as well as capacity building to the people. With a forward-thinking approach, the digital economy is poised to enable a level playing field for all, in ensuring that the benefits of digitalisation are accessible to everyone and securing the country's place in the digital age.



Prime Minister
Datuk Seri
Anwar Ibrahim

*Happy World Telecommunication
and Information Society Day 2023!*