

**Malaysian Children's Wellbeing Improved Tremendously In Last Two Decades - UNICEF
Bernama
Feb 17, 2015**

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 17 (Bernama) -- The overall wellbeing of children in Malaysia has improved tremendously in the last 20 years, said UNICEF Representative in Malaysia, Wivina Belmonte.

She said by acceding to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Malaysian government had made a legal commitment to invest in the wellbeing of its children and the results of the investment were seen today.

"Twenty years ago, Malaysia acceded to the CRC, the world's most widely ratified human rights treaty.

"Thanks to the efforts of the government and stakeholders including civil society, the private sector and members of the public, the overall wellbeing of children in Malaysia has improved tremendously," she said in a statement, here, Tuesday.

Belmonte said poverty rates had decreased; almost all children had access to education and significant improvements had been made to the child protection system, including the development of a national policy on children and national child protection policy as well as action plans for each.

This year, the Social Workers Bill, which had far-reaching positive impacts on the health, safety and protection of children in Malaysia was expected to be tabled in Parliament, she added.

"As we look back over the past 20 years to acknowledge the progress made for children, this is also a time to look forward to see what more can be done, especially for the most marginalised and vulnerable children in the country who are still left behind in terms of education, health, digital divide and protection," she said.

Belmonte said some of the areas that required continued attention included efforts to systematically strengthen protection networks for children and young people, including addressing gender violence and safety.

"As one of its obligations under the CRC, Malaysia enacted the Child Act in 2001. The provisions of the act are based on four core principles of the CRC - non-discrimination, best interest of the child, the right to life, survival and development, and respect for the views of the child.

"Currently, the Child Act is being reviewed to address gaps as the country moves towards a fully developed nation status by 2020.

"UNICEF lauds the recent proposal by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community

Development to draft amendments to the current legislation. This move emphasises the role of children in society, not just as members but also as stakeholders and it reflects the Malaysian and ASEAN region," she said.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2015 BERNAMA

Source : <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/newsindex.php?id=1109984>