

# Malaysia ready to work together towards halal food self-sufficiency

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 6 -- Malaysia has reaffirmed its willingness to work with other nations, especially within ASEAN, towards increasing self-sufficiency in halal food.

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said this call should also go beyond halal food to include halal pharmaceuticals, halal medical devices and even halal ingredients.

"As the current chairman of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), I would also like to call on all APEC economies to collaborate with Malaysia to make halal products more readily available, affordable and sustainable for the 1.8 billion global Muslim population," he said in his keynote address at the Halal Development Corporation Bhd's (HDC) 12th World Halal Conference here, today.

His speech was read by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed.

To date, the Prime Minister said Malaysia is one of the main sources of reference for over 150 countries in various areas within halal industry development and governance.

He said the country has also been recognised by 84 foreign halal certifiers in 46 countries.

"That said, I believe that the local halal industry still has a huge potential for growth. The Halal Industry Development Council (HIDC) established by the government has an important role to drive and oversee the entire Halal Malaysia ecosystem with the aim of making Malaysia a global halal hub," he said.

As a Muslim nation with an advanced halal industry, he said Malaysia is open to work with all countries to further enhance and grow the global halal sector, especially in the areas of Islamic finance, logistics and services.

Malaysia, he said has a wide variety of research institutes, which have played a leading role in advocating for contemporary halal issues.

"In terms of infrastructure, we are moving up the value chain to become a high-technology, knowledge-based and capital-intensive powerhouse, incorporating design, as well as research and development activities.

"Moving forward, the nation's plan is to further strengthen the country's infrastructure to reinforce halal's contribution to the country's economy, which currently accounts for approximately 7.8 per cent of the country's gross domestic product and has created over 350,000 new jobs for our citizen," he added.

Meanwhile, Muhyiddin said another area, which Malaysia is well-positioned to benefit and be actively part of is the ASEAN internet economy, which is estimated to reach US\$300 billion by 2025.

"There are over 360 million internet users across ASEAN, up from 260 million four years earlier. That compares to around 4.4 billion internet users worldwide, up 9.0 per cent from a year ago," he said.

He said the government is fully committed to developing a comprehensive industrial ecosystem, and for the halal industry to embrace new opportunities via the adoption of smart manufacturing processes that will enhance production flexibility and efficiency, and radically transform existing value chains and business models.

"The establishment of the Halal Integrated Platform (HIP) by the federal government is poised to connect members to key stakeholders, including state governments and agencies, certification bodies, industry players, practitioners, scholars, and consumers -- all under a single halal digital community platform," he said.

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