

NEWSLETTER

Advancing Social Development
through Community Empowerment



APPGM-SDG

**MODELS AND EMPOWERMENT FOR 30%
WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION:
FROM GLOBAL COMMITMENTS TO LOCAL REALITIES**

YB Puan Hajah Rodziah Ismail
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By YB Puan Hajah Rodziah Ismail
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MODELS AND EMPOWERMENT FOR 30% WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION: FROM GLOBAL COMMITMENTS TO LOCAL REALITIES

1. Better governance and higher integrity
2. Decisions that are not only less risky but more appropriate, inclusive, and sustainable
3. More encouraging economic or financial performance, as well as higher levels of innovation and creativity in the medium and long term
4. A more conducive and productive working environment

Women's participation in leadership roles and policy-making domains is no longer merely a demand for equality but a strategic necessity in ensuring inclusive, balanced, competitive, resilient, and sustainable national development. Although Malaysia has long affirmed its commitment to achieving at least 30% women's participation in decision-making positions, the reality on the ground shows that much remains to be done to reach this target comprehensively and consistently across all sectors and industries. Ironically, Malaysian women are among the best in the Asia-Pacific region in terms of access to and achievement in education. This implies that our primary issue is not a lack of talent, but rather a structural failure to translate the academic levels and skills of women into roles as leaders and policymakers.

The 30% quota target is not an arbitrary figure or mere rhetoric; it is based on the "critical mass" principle—the minimum threshold of participation that allows women's voices to truly influence decision-making, rather than being merely symbolic or complementary. Numerous international studies demonstrate that organisations and institutions with significant women's representation and gender diversity tend to exhibit the following characteristics:

Women's empowerment should not only be viewed as a component of the national development agenda but, more importantly, as a global commitment we have agreed upon. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5: Gender Equality clearly outlines that women must have full and effective participation in leadership and decision-making. However, the question remains: where do we stand today?

Three Critical Arenas: Seeking a More Determined and Spirited Reform Surge

The Corporate Sector: From Targets to Accountability
While we cannot deny progress in women's participation in the corporate sector, especially at the middle management level, a significant gap remains at the board of directors and top/senior management levels. Although women now hold approximately 31.4% of board seats in the top 100 listed companies—or from another perspective, 62 out of these 100 major companies have achieved 30% women's participation at the board level—many other companies, especially those not listed on the stock market, still have no female representation at all. Therefore, the approach must be overhauled from

From the Parliament to the Ground Column



general policies to specific targets, moving from mere "encouragement" to clear "accountability" to ensure continuity, sustainability, and growth. This approach should be viewed as a long-term investment in corporate competitiveness, not just mandatory compliance with laws and regulations.

Strategic steps that can be empowered include:

- Setting mandatory targets or a "comply or explain" policy for listed companies
- Women leadership pipeline development programmes
- Family-friendly workplace policies and work flexibility
- Specific incentives for companies that reach or exceed the 30% target

Administration and Public Service: Maintaining Momentum

While the fact that nearly 40% of civil servants are women is an achievement we can be proud of, we cannot rest on our laurels. Moving forward, we must ask:

- Are these female civil servants involved in core policy-making or only at the implementation stage?
- How many women occupy the most senior and strategic positions?

Proposed improvements to be considered include:

- Clearer and more transparent career paths to leadership and policy-making positions
- Specific mentor-mentee programs for high-potential female officers with a structured support system
- Performance appraisal systems that account for diversity and inclusivity
- Adjustment of work policies to support work-life balance

This approach is not only capable of empowering women but also enhancing the overall efficiency of the administrative system.

The Political Arena and Public Representation: The Most Significant Gap

Despite women making up nearly half of Malaysia's population and voters, their representation in the political arena today is deeply disappointing:

- Female Members of Parliament hover around 13.5%, compared to a global average exceeding 25% (many countries have already reached or approached the 30% target)
- Women are entrusted with less than 20% of Federal Government cabinet ministerial positions.

The challenges of women's participation in politics are more complex as they involve structural factors, culture, and societal perceptions. Consequently, we can no longer rely on natural change; we must introduce intervention mechanisms proven effective in other countries, including:

- A mandatory minimum quota of female candidates for every political party intended to contest in elections
- Comprehensive electoral system reform
- Special funds to finance campaign costs, alongside various other forms of support as a long-term national investment
- Systematic training and skill development programmes to identify and build female leadership talent

Women's participation in politics is not just illustrated by the number of elected representatives, but more importantly, by how they ensure public policies reflect the reality on the ground and meet the needs of the people.

Although the target of at least 30% women's participation has long been outlined, the reality is that despite some progress, we still face a stark gap, particularly within the political arena as a whole and among top decision-makers in both the corporate sector and public administration and services. It must be remembered that the primary challenge lies not only in policy, but also in implementation, organisational culture, and a support ecosystem that is not yet comprehensive. The real question is no longer "what do we want to achieve," but "why have we not yet achieved it." Therefore, beyond the international commitments signed and the experiences of other nations in fulfilling the women's empowerment agenda, there exists "closer to home" evidence of success at the state level that we can look to for inspiration and as a model.



Developing and Empowering Capable Women: From Selangor to the National Level

The Wanita Berdaya Selangor (WBS) initiative is powerful evidence that a community-based approach or model is capable of delivering a significant, tangible, and deep-rooted impact on women's empowerment, from the grassroots to the highest levels. The WBS model is not merely a concept but empirical proof that appropriate and timely intervention mechanisms can change everything. The following are among the key achievements of WBS:

- The implementation of Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) has established Selangor as a pioneer in Malaysia by integrating a gender perspective into public spending.
- The "Gender Mainstreaming Pilot Project" has strengthened gender integration within state policies and administration.
- The establishment of the Women Leadership Academy (AKW) has trained women in leadership and policy-making.
- The formation of the Selangor Women's Assembly (SIWANIS) serves as a grassroots platform providing women the space and opportunity to understand and engage in the processes of policy formulation and implementation.



Alhamdulillah, as a result, Selangor has successfully increased:

- Its female labor force participation rate to 69.8%, significantly higher than the national average of approximately 58.5% in 2025.
- The percentage of women in management positions to 33.4% in 2025.

Beyond mere facts and figures, this is all evidence that when a policy is supported by a corresponding ecosystem and infrastructure, women do not just participate—they excel as leaders. Therefore, it is highly appropriate for this model to be upgraded and enhanced to be scaled to the national level or expanded as a national framework.

Proposal for the Establishment of the "Pusat Wanita Berdaya" (PWB) in 222 Parliamentary Constituencies Nationwide

To ensure a scalable, integrated, and sustainable approach while expanding successful outcomes comprehensively, it is proposed that a PWB be established in all 222 Parliamentary constituencies to fulfil the following functions:

1. Women's Economic Development Hub, providing:
 - a. Skills training, particularly in entrepreneurship, finance, and the digitalisation agenda.
 - b. Access to various forms of support and assistance, including women's participation in high-growth, high-value (HGHV) industries; market access for sales, and financing/funding
 - c. Micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) incubators specifically for women
2. Leadership Platform and Hub, providing:
 - a. Political and leadership training at all levels, from grassroots and communities to the highest tiers of the corporate sector, public administration, and political representation
 - b. Exposure to the formulation and implementation of laws and public policy, including those related to women's rights and gender equality
 - c. Networking and support circles for women across various sectors and industries
3. Data Platform to support monitoring and evaluation, serving as:
 - a. A centre for localised data collection regarding women's participation affairs
 - b. A monitoring centre for the periodic implementation of programmes and activities, as well as impact and outcome assessments
 - c. A provider of support and assistance for the formulation of evidence-based policies.
4. Integrated Social Support Centre (Welfare and Well-being), providing:
 - a. Support and assistance for vulnerable groups, including children, single mothers, the elderly, and persons with disabilities (PWD)

- b. Advisory services, counseling, guidance, and other psychosocial support.
- c. Programmes to achieve work-life and work-family balance

To ensure efficiency and effectiveness, the implementation of the PWB toward achieving the 30% target must be supported through:

- Close cooperation between stakeholders, including Federal and State governments, local authorities, the private sector, and NGOs
- Dedicated, continuous, and sustainable funding to finance development and operational expenses, including programmes and activities
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation with clear and comprehensive Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- A localised approach that considers the unique characteristics and needs of each Parliamentary constituency



This approach ensures that policies are not “one-size-fits-all” but are instead responsive to local realities and unique contexts. In fact, the proposal to establish the PWB in all 222 Parliamentary constituencies is a wise, logical, and strategic move, given its potential to:

- Directly support and assist in achieving SDG 5 targets. For example, the PWB can serve as an instrument for implementing SDG 5.5, which focuses on women’s participation in leadership and decision-making at the grassroots level.

- Bridge and even close structural gaps. By providing training programmes, networking opportunities among women, and various forms of support and assistance, the PWB can overcome the systemic barriers that have long hindered women from rising to leadership positions.
- Build a national “leadership pipeline.” From the grassroots and community levels to Parliament, we will build a seamless, continuous, and sustainable chain of female talent.



Conclusion: From Rhetoric to Action

We can no longer view the women’s agenda and gender equality as a peripheral issue; it is a national agenda. When women are empowered, families become more prosperous and harmonious, communities more cohesive and united, and the nation stronger and more affluent. In today’s global context, the 30% target should no longer be an aspiration or an end goal, but rather the minimum baseline to be achieved. If we are truly serious about achieving SDG 5 and building an inclusive, balanced, and equitable Malaysia, we must have the courage to make changes—shifting from merely drafting good policies to consistent and determined implementation, fueled by political will, genuine perseverance, and tireless effort.

Empowering women’s participation to reach at least 30% in leadership and policy-making is not just about meeting international commitments; it is a strategic step for the future of our nation. By strengthening the three key arenas—corporate, public service, and politics—while expanding the Wanita Berdaya model through the establishment of Pusat Wanita Berdaya nationwide, Malaysia has the potential to build an ecosystem that is truly inclusive, fair, and resilient.



WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS: THE PRACTICAL REALISATION OF GENDER EQUALITY

By Omna Sreeni-Ong
(Head of Secretariat, APPGM – Gender Equality;
Co-Chair Malaysian CSO-SDG Alliance;
Founder and Principal Consultant, ENGENDER)

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are drivers of sustainable development in all its dimensions. Without granting women and girls rights, progress will inevitably falter and the 2030 Agenda will be in jeopardy. In short, there can be no sustainable development if the tangible and intangible barriers that hold back half the population are not addressed. This is directly aligned to Agenda 2030's core principle of Leaving No One Behind, which means placing the progress of the most marginalized communities first - women and girls being all too often at the top of the list. Advancing gender equality requires a transformative approach to end all forms of direct and indirect discrimination against women and girls.

Different groups of women and men experience life differently due to their multiple identities (sex, age, disability, marital status, ethnicity, nationality, work, education etc) which overlap with social norms, compounding multiple levels of disadvantage they experience. Globally and in Malaysia, it is factually evident that women and girls continue to be disproportionately disadvantaged. Recognizing the multidimensional issues faced particularly by those who are and risk being left behind is critical. This requires providing integrated interventions to break the vicious cycle and respond to people's interdependent experiences of exclusion and deprivation. An understanding of these interlinkages

necessitates looking at progress, gaps and challenges for gender equality not solely at SDG5 but across the 2030 Agenda as a whole.

The theme of International Women's Day 2026 is aptly Rights. Justice. Action for all women and girls. No country or society can achieve prosperity when half its population are left behind.

A girl who is born into a poor household (Target 1.2) and forced into early marriage (Target 5.3) is more likely to drop out of school (Target 4.1), give birth at an early age (Target 3.7), suffer complications during childbirth (Target 3.1) and experience violence (Target 5.2) than a girl from a higher-income household who marries at a later age. At the end of this chain of events, the girl who was born into poverty stands almost no chance of moving out of it.

A woman who leaves an abusive relationship needs access to justice (Target 16.3) as well as a safe place to live (Target 11.1), medical care (Target 3.8) and a decent job (Target 8.5) so she can maintain an adequate standard of living for herself and any dependents she may have.

Access to decent work and regular income in the hands of women, for example, contribute not only to poverty reduction (SDG 1) but also support better education, health and nutrition outcomes for women and girls (SDGs 2, 3 and 4).

(Source: UN Women 2018, Turning Promises into Action)



Special Feature Column

While Malaysia has made strides in legislative and policy reforms in its efforts to accord greater protection and redress, persistent challenges and barriers remain, affecting vulnerable and marginalised groups in the population, namely women and girls - across their life course. Women in Malaysia continue to face persistent structural and cultural barriers in economic and political spheres. They are disproportionately poorer, lack holistic, effective and timely healthcare; legal aid and justice; awareness and effective access to support services; compounded by deeply engrained socio-cultural biases that hinder voice and agency.

Notwithstanding, Malaysia’s vibrant tapestry of women and girls—from rural farmers in Sabah and indigenous Orang Asli communities in the interiors of Peninsular Malaysia to urban low-wage workers in Petaling Jaya—embody remarkable resilience despite enduring systemic barriers. Like their sisters across the region and the world, Malaysian women are increasingly coming to the fore, pushing through persistent cultural and traditional constraints that have shaped patriarchal attitudes and behaviours, many of which risk being passed from one generation to the next. This growing momentum underscores both the urgency and the potential of advancing gender equality as a cornerstone of inclusive and sustainable development.

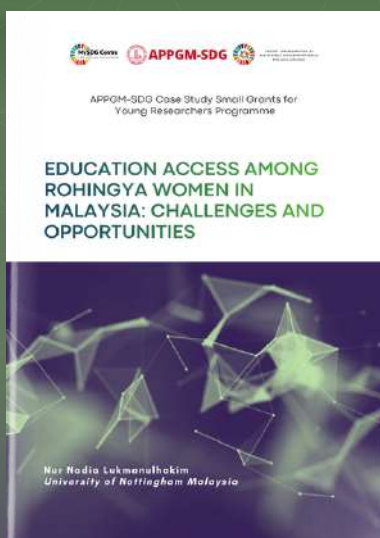
In this context, the expanding role of parliamentarians in shaping the gender equality agenda for a stronger democracy has become increasingly evident. Since 2021, the work of the APPGM-SDG has demonstrated tangible progress in localising the Sustainable Development Goals within parliamentary constituencies, where a significant share of solutions-oriented projects support the empowerment of women.

Complementing these efforts, the APPGM-Gender Equality, established in 2025, further reinforces Parliament’s commitment by embedding gender mainstreaming across its structures, policies, processes, and institutional culture. Together these initiatives signal a more deliberate and coordinated parliamentary approach to advancing gender equality.

All said, transformative change can only happen when we shift from rhetoric to transformative leadership to enable the practical realisation of equality in the lived realities of all women and girls.



LATEST PUBLICATION

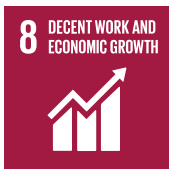


Due to the absence of a national refugee policy and Malaysia’s non-signatory status to both the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Refugee Protocol, refugee access to basic healthcare, education, and economic opportunities remain severely limited. This paper examines educational access for Rohingya women in Malaysia, encompassing both skills training programmes and higher education.





FROM INTENTION TO HOPE: REVITALISING COMMUNITY TOURISM ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES IN PASOH



infusion of hope, signalling that the community's efforts were seen and valued. My involvement as an APPGM-SDG Solution Provider was born out of a desire to help the Pasoh community rise gradually—becoming resilient and building upon their own strengths. From this point, the community began to find the courage to move forward. The greatest challenge was not a matter of funding or infrastructure, but reigniting the community's belief in themselves and helping to shift their mindset. A lack of infrastructure did not hinder our efforts. On the contrary, these constraints became the driving force to keep moving, to innovate, and to prove that change does not wait for perfection—it begins with courage.



The Pasoh Community Tourism and "Kebuniti" Project, through an integrated approach of community tourism and sustainable "kebuniti", is developed as an ecosystem that connects nature, food, culture, and people. Community tourism serves as a space for learning, restoring confidence, and generating income. Homestay operators are guided to improve accommodation quality, cleanliness, and guest experiences, while local guides are trained to ethically share stories of geo-sites, local heritage, and the community's way of life. The community members are no longer mere observers; they are key players—receiving guests, sharing stories, and reaping the rewards of their own hard work. This is where the contributions to SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) become a reality. However, as tourism strengthened, a critical need emerged: a dependency on external raw materials was affecting costs and sustainability. From this need, "kebuniti", a sustainable small scale agriculture was born, that utilises the spaces around homes and homestays.

Change does not always begin with confidence; sometimes, it starts with exhaustion, doubt, and a small intention that refuses to fade. As a local of Pasoh, I have witnessed firsthand how the community once felt marginalised. It was not because they lacked capability, but because they had not been given the space to try for far too long. Many women, senior citizens, and the FELDA generation viewed small-scale farming, aquaculture, and community tourism as difficult ventures that could not guarantee a sustainable income.

Everything began with a single belief that Pasoh's natural treasures and heritage should not be left without meaning. From that sense of responsibility, an effort was born to connect environmental conservation with economic development through community tourism and sustainable "kebuniti" (community farming). Although the steps were small and often clouded by doubt, they formed the foundation for a change that is now taking root within the community. The year 2023 marked a turning point when APPGM-SDG extended its support. The assistance received was not merely financial; it was an

Voices from the Grassroots

Kebuniti supplies raw materials for homestay kitchens, tourism gastronomy activities, and the community's daily needs. This initiative brings SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) to life at the grassroots level. Simultaneously, various workshops and training sessions are conducted in line with SDG 4 (Quality Education), covering motivation, homestay management, hygiene, safety, and digital promotion. Women, who previously only played supporting roles, now bravely lead the management of homestays and gardens, and serve as guides for community activities—reflecting SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

The Cooperative and Strategic Grant Support were established as the community initiatives grew, the need arose for a more organised, transparent, and sustainable structure. From this awareness, the Koperasi Pelancongan Hanya D'Pasoh Berhad was established on 22nd of November 2023. It serves as a collective platform uniting homestay operators, local guides, product entrepreneurs, and community farmers within a single social economy movement. This initiative supports SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). These gradual efforts subsequently received support through strategic grants that strengthened the community's overall capacity.

In August 2024, the cooperative received the MADANI Sejati Grant (RM40,000), which was used to bolster cultural heritage and community tourism through the purchase of traditional musical instruments, traditional attire, cultural tents, and sound systems to support cultural activities and community performances. Meanwhile, in October 2024, the Desa Lestari Grant (RM1 million) focused on the development of basic tourism infrastructure. This included the construction of public toilets, seminar rooms, hostels, and homestay units, which serve as the foundation for visitor comfort, community training, and the operational longevity of Pasoh's community tourism. Additionally, in July 2025, the SKM Jejak Grant (RM12,500) was utilised for governance, capacity building, and promotion—including the preparation of promotional materials and marketing support to expand the reach of community tourism.



We started with an intention, and we persevered with hope. Today, we move forward with confidence. What is happening in Pasoh proves that the SDGs are not merely a global agenda or reports on paper, they live at the grassroots level. They live in the hands that plant, in the homes that receive guests, and in a community that chooses to rise together. When people are given trust, when the land is given value, and when heritage is given meaning, change is no longer a dream, it becomes a way of life and a legacy for generations to come. With deep gratitude, I would like to express my highest appreciation and thanks to APPGM-SDG for the trust and opportunity given to ATOA Enterprise in our role as a Solution Provider. The support we received became a source of strength and confidence at a time when our community efforts faced various constraints. This trust has reignited hope, nurtured grassroots initiatives, and served as a catalyst for the Pasoh community to continue moving forward sustainably and with dignity.

*By Norazlini Mohd Ali
(APPGM-SDG Solution Provider)*





BEYOND THE FARM: LIVELIHOODS TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE DUCK EGG PROJECT



When I joined the duck egg farming project under APPGM-SDG as a Solution Provider, I believed my contribution would mainly be technical—sharing knowledge, structuring modules, and ensuring implementation followed the plan. I soon realized that this journey was not just about transferring skills, but about walking alongside a community as they rediscovered their own potential.

On the first day, I stood among participants whose faces reflected both hope and uncertainty. Some had never been involved in farming, while others were quietly searching for a way to stabilize their household income. In that moment, SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) felt very real. My role was not to promise success, but to create a pathway—one built on discipline, learning, and trust.

As we introduced the four-month roadmap—covering coop management, training schedules, and marketing—participants began to see that this was more than just "raising ducks." It was about building sustainable livelihoods. Through Module 1 on Sustainable Agriculture, I watched perspectives shift from confusion to curiosity. They realized that sustainable agriculture was more than producing food; it was about protecting the environment, reducing costs,

and improving food quality. This was SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) in action. For many, it was the first time they understood how small daily actions on the farm could ripple out to impact their families, community, and environment.

One of the most meaningful challenges was encouraging confidence, especially among the women participants. At first, many hesitated to speak. Over time, through inclusive discussions and hands-on learning, their voices grew stronger. Witnessing this transformation reminded me why SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality) must be embedded intentionally. Learning is not effective unless everyone feels seen and valued.

The turning point came during our site visits. Standing in the middle of large-scale farms surrounded by thousands of ducks, participants began to understand that every egg carries a story of planning, hygiene, and discipline. At a duck egg farm owned by Nik Zulkifli Mat Yazid, participants witnessed how discipline, courage, and careful planning had turned a vision into reality. Later, at a large farm in Kuala Krai, the sight of thousands of ducks left them momentarily speechless. They observed coop management, infrastructure, and operational systems, learning firsthand about rural food security and the economic challenges affecting local farmers. By the end of the visit, their mindset had shifted—they no longer asked if this project could succeed; they asked how far they could take it. Nik Zulkifli's journey became living proof of what courage and discipline could achieve.



The visit to Hakimi Azrol Mohd Zaki’s farm in Pasir Mas reinforced these lessons. Participants learned about coop design, lighting, ventilation, and sanitation practices that enhanced productivity and ensured animal welfare. Cleanliness and careful management became tangible lessons in responsibility, showing how technical knowledge directly affects SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), food safety, and overall sustainability.

By the fourth month, participants no longer saw themselves as mere recipients of aid. They spoke as confident contributors to their community’s economy and food systems. As a Solution Provider, I witnessed how guidance, shared learning, and encouragement can transform potential into agency. This project demonstrated that sustainable development begins when people are empowered to believe in themselves—a lesson that resonates across SDG 4 and SDG 5 as well.



This journey taught me that my role with APPGM-SDG is not to lead from the front, but to walk beside communities—translating global goals into lived experiences. Sustainable development begins when people believe they are capable. And sometimes, the most powerful change starts quietly—with learning, trust, and the courage to begin.

*By Yusmazida Mohd Yusoff
(APPGM-SDG Solution Provider)*



**APPGM
GenderEquality**



**YAYASAN
HASANAH**



JEMPUTAN PROGRAM

**SAMBUTAN
HARI WANITA 2026**

Anjuran

Parlimen Malaysia bersama APPGM-SDG dan APPGM-Kesaksamaan Gender

Wanita Mematangkan Demokrasi

7HB APRIL 2026 | SELASA | 9.00AM - 4.30PM

DEWAN BANKUET, ARAS G, BLOK UTAMA, PARLIMEN MALAYSIA

Sesi Panel:

*“Wanita sebagai Institusi:
Cabaran dan Masa depan”*

Bengkel

*“Realiti Di Sebalik
Kepimpinan Wanita”*

Pameran Reruai

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5 2 - 6 MAR 2026



NAVIGATING THE DEVELOPMENT GAP: INFRASTRUCTURE AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHALLENGES IN THE SEPANGGAR CONSTITUENCY



The Sepanggar Parliamentary constituency, located north of Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, is often viewed as a reflection of the state's rapid development. Represented by Member of Parliament YB Datuk Ts. Mustapha Sakmud, the area encompasses three main State Legislative Assemblies (DUN): Karambunai, Inanam, and Darau. Its diverse landscape, ranging from the beautiful coastal areas of Karambunai and lush green hills to dense suburban settlements, makes Sepanggar unique in terms of both potential and challenges. The presence of key institutions such as Universiti Malaysia Sabah and the Sepanggar Bay Container Port further solidifies its position as a strategic education and logistics hub in Sabah.

However, behind this narrative of progress, an issue mapping visit conducted by the APPGM-SDG Sabah Region team reveals a more complex and layered reality. A five-day site visit across nine selected

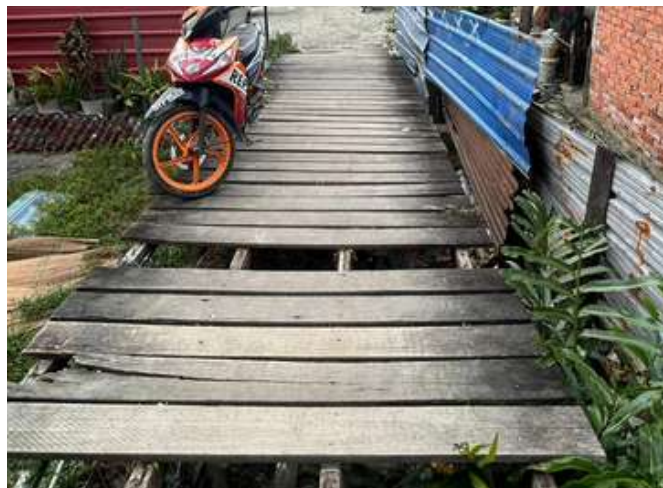
villages shows that development in Sepanggar remains unbalanced, with a significant gap between areas benefiting from development spillovers and those still struggling with basic needs. These findings do not merely highlight physical issues but also touch upon interconnected social, economic, and governance dimensions.

In the Inanam constituency, covering Kg Talungan, Kg Bantayan, and Kg Ruminding, basic issues such as unpaved roads, limited agricultural access, and frequent water and electricity disruptions remain a daily reality for residents. A lack of internet connectivity and basic facilities like street lighting and waste management systems reflects a lag in the provision of essential services. More worryingly, social issues such as drug abuse and land (*tanah adat*) conflicts in Kg Bantayan indicate that development challenges here are not just physical but also involve social instability and long-standing tenure uncertainty.



The situation in Karambunai displays a different but equally critical form of marginalisation. In villages like Kg Pulau Sepanggar, Kg Unggun, and Kg Lawa Mondou, access to electricity and clean water is still not universal, forcing residents to rely on generators, gravity-fed water, and rainwater harvesting. This not only increases the cost of living but also exposes residents to health risks. Furthermore, geographical challenges, such as dependency on boat transport, uncondusive agricultural roads, and wildlife disturbances, directly impact the safety and livelihoods of the population. Simultaneously, issues of drug abuse, a lack of housing sites, and inadequate public facilities illustrate the pressures of development that has not been planned inclusively.

In Darau, the challenges are more focused on urbanisation pressures and population density. Areas like Kg Cenderamata Likas 2, Kg Rampayan, and Kg Kalansanan face issues involving squatter settlements, a lack of public amenities, and inefficient drainage systems that lead to recurring floods. Disruptions to water and electricity caused by illegal connections, the presence of non-local residents, and rising social cases such as drugs and dengue fever highlight weaknesses in peri-urban management. At the same time, a high dependency on the fishing sector with inconsistent income further adds to the economic vulnerability of the local community.



Critically, the findings of this visit show that the issues in the Sepanggar constituency cannot be viewed in isolation or as purely sectoral matters. Weaknesses in inter-agency coordination, incomplete project implementation, and inconsistent maintenance have created a stark development divide, even though the area is located near the city centre. Furthermore, the lack of community involvement in decision-making processes has eroded public trust in institutions. The geographical excuse often used to explain development delays must also be re-evaluated; innovative and targeted approaches are more than capable of overcoming these constraints if planned meticulously.

Therefore, the future of the Sepanggar constituency depends on the extent to which development approaches can be overhauled to be more inclusive, integrated, and responsive to the realities on the ground. Priority must be given to the universal provision of basic needs, alongside strengthening governance and ensuring community participation at every stage of planning. Only through a fair, people-centred approach can the true potential of Sepanggar—as a strategic area balanced between modern development and community wellbeing—be realised.

*By Mc Jeanet Lempisik @ Marx
(Acting Head of Sabah Region APPGM-SDG)*



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3 MAR 2026



STRENGTHENING THE BIPARTISAN PARTNERSHIP OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The APPGM-SDG Committee Meeting BIL 2/26 was successfully held at Parlimen Malaysia on 3rd March 2026, bringing together Members of Parliament serving on the Committee and the Secretariat for a productive and meaningful discussion.

A total of six YBs attended the meeting, together with eight Secretariat staff, including our Head of Secretariat, Prof. Datuk Dr. Denison Jayasooria.

The presence and commitment of all parties reflect a shared determination to strengthen the role of All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia on SDGs (APPGM-SDG) as a bipartisan platform localising the sustainable development goals in Malaysia.

This meeting focused on the strategic planning for 2026, particularly efforts to further localise the SDGs at the parliamentary constituency level.

The discussions emphasised a community-based approach, empowering grassroots communities, strengthening collaboration among diverse stakeholders, and ensuring that no one is left behind in the development process.

The meeting proceeded smoothly and yielded constructive outcomes. We extend our highest appreciation and sincere thanks to all YBs for their attendance, continued support, and commitment in advancing the SDG agenda for the wellbeing of the people.

Together, we will continue to strengthen networks, empower communities, and drive inclusive and sustainable development across the nation.

APPGM-SDG Committee Members who attended:



NO.	NAME	POSITION
1	YB Puan Isnaraissah Munirah Majilis@Fakharudy	Chairperson
2	YB Tuan Zahari Kechik	Secretary
3	YB Puan Young Syefura Othman	Member
4	YB Dato' Hajah Siti Zailah Mohd Yusoff	Member
5	YB Senator Isaiah a/I D.Jacob	Member
6	YB Senator Dr. Jufitri Joha	Member

*By Arif Azhad Abdul Ghaffar
(Corporate Communication Unit)*

7 6 MAR 2026



THE POWER OF ECOSYSTEMS: SHARING MALAYSIA'S SDG LOCALISATION MODEL WITH ASEAN PARTNERS

MySDG Academy had the pleasure of hosting a delegation on 6th March 2026 participating in the 4th Asian Convergence Initiative (ACI) Educational Visit and Knowledge Exchange in Kuala Lumpur.

The delegation included several mayors and local government officials from the Philippines, who are actively advancing the sustainable development agenda in their respective cities and communities.

During the exchange, we shared Malaysia's experience in localising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the APPGM-SDG ecosystem.

What makes this model unique is how different institutions play complementary roles within the ecosystem:

- APPGM-SDG serves as the national engine driving SDG localisation, bridging policy and grassroots action.
- MySDG Academy acts as the mobiliser, building capacity and activating multi-stakeholder participation.
- MySDG Centre for Social Inclusion functions as the think tank, providing research support, policy insights, and strategic direction.

Under the leadership of Prof. Datuk Dr. Denison Jayasooria, this ecosystem has evolved into a collaborative platform that connects policy, knowledge, and community action, while also serving as a bridge for regional partnerships.

Through exchanges like this, we not only share experiences but also explore how ASEAN partners can work together to accelerate the implementation and impact of the SDGs.



By Zoel Ng
(MySDG Academy)



8 MAR 2026



ADVANCING INCLUSIVITY: BRIDGING MALAYSIAN INDIAN CONCERNS WITH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

APPGM-SDG organised the programme “Studies on Malaysian Indian Concerns and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” on 8th March 2026 at Ruang Komuniti MySDG, Petaling Jaya.

The session brought together 62 participants, including researchers, academicians, community and NGO leaders, activists, book writers, APPGM-SDG staff, local coordinators, and members of the public. The programme provided an important platform to discuss key issues affecting the Malaysian Indian community, including political leadership, community concerns, and findings from the Multi-Dimensional Poverty Study.

We were honoured to have distinguished speakers and participants who contributed meaningful insights and perspectives, including:

- YB Rajiv Rishyakaran, ADUN Gasing
- Datuk Ravin Ponniah, Former Special Officer to the Prime Minister
- Ms. Kasthuriraani Patto, DAP Secretary for International Affairs
- Dr. Velan Kunjuraman, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)

Their participation and contributions enriched the discussions and strengthened the dialogue on community development in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In conjunction with this programme, APPGM-SDG will be organising a Conference on Malaysian Indian Studies and Sustainable Development Goals on 12–13 December 2026.



*By Darshini Rawichandran
(Project Management Department)*



APPGM-SDG PROJECT VISIT TO TUARAN PARLIAMENT: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

On 11th to 12th March 2026, an APPGM-SDG delegation conducted a Phase 1 project visit to the Tuaran Parliamentary constituency to evaluate the impact of community projects supporting rural economic transformation and environmental sustainability. The visit involved beneficiaries, Solution Partners, and the project implementation team.

Mushroom Agropreneurship & Green Skills

The visit began with the Rural Economic Transformation through Mushroom Agropreneurship & Green Skills Training project, which benefits 20 community members. Participants shared that they have successfully generated additional income ranging from RM20 to RM50 per harvest, with daily yields reaching between 400 grams and 1 kilogram. The harvests are sold either to Nurfirdaus Mushroom or directly to local buyers.

The delegation also inspected the Nurfirdaus mushroom block processing factory, where 1,000 blocks had been steamed and another 600 were in the inoculation process by participants. For beneficiaries who have completed their mushroom houses, an initial 50 blocks were distributed, while the

remaining 50 blocks will be provided in stages to assist with crop management. A Q&A session at the end of the visit allowed participants to share challenges and receive guidance from the project team and strategic partners.

Waste Management and Agro-integration

On the second day, the delegation visited two additional community projects. The first was Zero Waste Kg. Gerinsing, which aims to foster sustainable waste management practices, joined by Ms. Ruth as the Solution Partner and eight Task Force members. The project has successfully developed an administrative system to document fund utilization, waste management payments, and household payment records. In terms of health impact, no new dengue cases have been reported in Kg. Gerinsing since the project began in January. Community participation has also increased from 60 to 80 households.



The next visit focused on the Agro-integration Project: Increasing Income through Bananas and Catfish with Mr. Rayner as the project partner. This project has maintained a low catfish mortality rate by utilizing clean gravity-fed water. However, the growth of the banana crops was found to be slightly slow due to the rainy season.



Conclusion

This two-day visit proves that community projects supported by APPGM-SDG not only enhance skills and income but also contribute to environmental sustainability. This success demonstrates that an integrated approach between beneficiaries, Solution Partners, and implementation teams can drive sustainable community transformation and provide inspiration for future project implementation.



*By Nor Amirul Pukin
(Project Management Officer for Sabah Region)*

STUDIES ON MALAYSIAN INDIAN CONCERNS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

APPGM-SDG 1st Organised Conference on Malaysian Indian Studies and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SUB-THEMES

- ✓ Political Leadership and Social Change in the Malaysian Indian Community
- ✓ Thought Leaders and Intellectual Perspectives on Community Development
- ✓ Multi-Dimensional Poverty among the Malaysian Indian Community

ABSTRACT

- ✓ Maximum 300 words
- ✓ Written in English and Bahasa Melayu
- ✓ Clearly state background, objective, methodology, and key findings
- ✓ Include relevance to the conference theme and SDGs
- ✓ Include 3-5 keywords

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appgmsdgianianstudies@gmail.com

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10 12 MAR 2026



ROYAL SUPPORT FOR LOCAL ACTION: APPGM-SDG BRIEFS DYTM YANG DI-PERTUAN MUDA TERENGGANU ON KUALA NERUS POLICY INTERVENTIONS

His Royal Highness the Yang Di-Pertuan Muda of Terengganu, Tengku Muhammad Ismail Ibni Al-Wathiqu Billah Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin, graced the occasion to receive a briefing from the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia on Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) at the Kuala Nerus District and Land Office on 12th March 2026.

The briefing session was presented by the APPGM-SDG Head of Secretariat, Prof. Datuk Dr. Denison Jayasooria, alongside the Head of the East Coast Zone, Dr. Siti Nur Ain, the Deputy Director of the Policy Solutions Department, Dr. Wan Asiah Nurjannah, and the Kuala Nerus Local Coordinator, Atikah Nor.

During the session, HRH the Yang Di-Pertuan Muda of Terengganu was given an in-depth explanation regarding the role of APPGM-SDG as a collaborative platform between Parliament and society. The briefing also touched upon aspects of sustainable and inclusive development, as well as the sharing of best practices involving grassroots community cooperation in resolving local issues through issue mapping within the Kuala Nerus district.



Also in attendance for the royal audience was the Kuala Nerus District Officer, Haji Ahmad Azizi Zulkifli, along with senior officials from the Kuala Nerus District and Land Office.

The APPGM-SDG delegation also included Paniirselvam Jayaraman (Director of the Policy Solution Department), as well as Local Coordinators, Masniza Eliyana (Hulu Terengganu) and Dr. Rabeah Adawiyah (Kemaman).

It is hoped that this session will serve as a catalyst for the wellbeing of the community in Kuala Nerus, in line with the state's sustainable development agenda.



By Dr. Siti Nur Ain Zakinuddin (Head of East Coast Zone)



We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the Members of Parliament for their unwavering cooperation and commitment. Throughout the month, APPGM-SDG has had the privilege of engaging with various parliamentary constituencies through various meeting and events such as the formal handover of the Preliminary Report of Policy Interventions (a collaboration between Yayasan Hasanah and APPGM-SDG), official events and more. These milestones were made possible through the dedicated efforts between the Members of Parliament and APPGM-SDG. We value this synergy between policy and grassroots action, and we look forward to further strengthening our partnership to advance the Sustainable Development Goals across Malaysia.

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