

Yayasan MySDG will help change lives for the better, protect our environment



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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob attended the establishment of Malaysia Sustainable Development Goals Foundation (MySDG) at the Ministry of Finance. Also present was Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz. -BERNAMA file pic

The launch of Yayasan MySDG last week is indeed a momentous event for the nation.

"This groundbreaking initiative," as mentioned by the UN representative, "will channel new resources to support national efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Malaysia by 2030.

"It will go a long way to fund and support projects that will help change lives and livelihoods for the better, and protect Malaysia's natural environment."

In this highly uncertain world, SDGs have the potential of helping countries embark on a more balanced, stable and effective pathway to sustainability.

They can bring humanity together on a common platform to solve global problems, like the climate change crisis. The 17 goals are applicable everywhere, addressing key challenges, from eradicating poverty and fighting racism as well as inequality, to saving

the world from going into the Anthropocene, especially in light of the pandemic, as we build a more rigorous resiliency towards a sustainable future.

This is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, also known as Education 2030, in advocating transformative learning that integrates social and environmental dimensions.

The main target of the 5Ps — people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership — for SDGs remain the overarching goals to be met in less than a decade from now. It becomes even more crucial as the international community grapples with the pandemic, and the many (un)natural disasters that create multifaceted impacts globally.

The new normal of whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, indeed the whole-institution and whole-person, is a key policy change that must be attempted by collaborating across all sectors and divides.

The old ways of tackling issues from segmented or siloed standpoints are inadequate, and could be counterproductive in the long term.

This is evident as experienced by many in the execution of vaccination programmes worldwide, further dividing international communities into those who were vaccinated and the unvaccinated.

The whole approach has failed to be implemented in ensuring a sustainable vaccination programme.

Developed countries have been shown to be far more likely to vaccinate their citizens, which risks prolonging the pandemic and widening global inequality.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has set a global target of 70 per cent of the population of all countries to be vaccinated by mid-2022.

To do so needs a more equitable access to vaccines.

The WHO director-general said vaccine equity was "not rocket science, nor charity. It is smart public health and in everyone's best interest".

In this regard, the 2019 United Nations General Assembly called for a steep change in policymaking and the adoption of innovative responses, and advocates for multi-source, multi-partner financing arrangements to overcome urgent issues.

The Yayasan is poised to play this role by enabling the pooling of funds from various sources in support of projects championed by civil society organisations, UN agencies and other development and educational players.

It is relevant in realising the 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP) where the SDG planning framework has been adopted for the first time in a comprehensive way, and the SDG focus in the 2022 Budget.

Given the ambition to meet the 2030 target, Education for Sustainable Development must not be left unnoticed as in the 12MP, though this has been picked recently by the Higher Education Ministry. In other words, reorienting education to SDG is imperative as the mission moves forward.

The ministry's Education Blueprint 2015-2025, which unfortunately missed the bulk of the SDG aspiration as compared with the Fourth Industrial Revolution agenda, must be recrafted to balance out the latter in a sustainable way and deliver an inclusive and sustainable future by humanising technology in light of Japan's approach to Society 5.0.

It so happens that 2022 marks the 40th anniversary of the Look East Policy initiated in 1981.

This is an opportunity to reach out to marginalised and vulnerable groups, as identified in the subthemes of 17 SDGs, so that no one is left behind in areas of unmet and overlooked needs.

Otherwise, it is hard to imagine what the future would be like for humanity.

The writer is a member of the Board of Trustee of Yayasan MySDG, and an NST columnist for more than 20 years