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## Triumph in sustainability in extraordinary times



LETTERS

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MALAYSIA'S participation in Expo 2020 Dubai marked a new beginning for our country after the Covid-19 pandemic. Being part of the team that tackled this massive endeavour was both humbling and eye-opening.

Despite the initial setbacks, including the Covid-19 pandemic, the Malaysia Pavilion was an incredible success thanks to the brilliant and dedicated personnel of the Science, Technology, and Innovation Ministry (Mosti), the implementing agency, the Malaysian Green Technology and Climate Change Corporation, and the strong support of other ministries, 70 agencies and five state governments.

Our rainforest canopy pavilion welcomed 1.2 million visitors throughout the six-month event, well exceeding our target.

In keeping with Malaysia's Expo theme, "Energising Sustainability", we constructed the world's first net zero carbon pavilion using exhibits that reinforced our national vision and aspirations towards sustainable development and our commitment to conserving our rainforest as the lung of the planet.

As our #MyButterflyEffect campaign suggests, Malaysia, despite being a developing country, is one of the key leaders in future-proofing a sustainable world, starting with drastic policy changes, including how we go about doing business.

We believe that we provided a truly Malaysian experience by spotlighting our rainforests, culture and diversity in a high-level business setting. Our pavilion was built around the rainforest canopy using sustainable materials and obtaining appropriate carbon offsets.

To offset the 1,240m<sup>2</sup> net carbon emissions for the pavilion, we participated in sustainable forest management (REDDPLUS) and planting of trees under the 100 million Tree-planting Campaign 2020-2025. We hope this will set a precedent for Malaysia's future business blueprint.

We held 26 weekly thematic trade and business programmes in efforts to inclusively provide over 400 local companies access to global markets including start-ups, SMEs and big players. Each week, they were provided booths to showcase their products and services free of charge, besides networking with business communities.

Over 1,000 business-related events were activated with 60,000 people attending physically. This resulted in Malaysia achieving a new high of over RM70bil in potential trade, business and investment value.

We not only showcased our businesses but also aspects of our rich culture to the global community. About 800 shows were performed over a six-month period, and we also held numerous cultural collaborations with countries and organisations at the Expo.

In addition, we featured an arts and crafts exhibition with Malaysian Batik, and weaving and beading crafts by Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation (Kraftangan Malaysia) artists.

The transformation of the Malaysia Pavilion into a Technology and Innovation Hub under the UAE government's Expo 2020 Dubai five-year legacy programme reflects our country's ambition to become a globally competitive digital nation.

It also demonstrates our government's commitment to strengthening bilateral ties and cooperation with the UAE.

I am truly grateful to the Malaysian government, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob, Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba, previous STI ministers and commissioners-general, my colleagues at the ministry, and all those involved in the Malaysia Pavilion for the Dubai Expo.

**DATUK ZAINAL ABIDIN ABU HASSAN**

**Commissioner-general for Malaysia's Participation in Expo 2020 Dubai and secretary-general of the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry**