



CENTRE ON INTEGRATED RURAL
DEVELOPMENT FOR ASIA AND
THE PACIFIC (CIRDAP)



MALAYSIA

The second celebration of

WORLD RURAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

2026 (July 6)

Special Edition of CIRDAP

**Building Rural Futures:
Malaysia's Journey Towards
Vibrant, Prosperous and
Happy Communities**



THEME 2026

**"Towards Vibrant,
Prosperous and Happy
Rural Communities"**



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INCLUSIVE
RURAL DEVELOPMENT



POVERTY GRADUATION
& LIVELIHOOD SECURITY



GREEN & SUSTAINABLE
AGRICULTURE



PARTNERSHIP FOR
RURAL PROSPERITY

Building Rural Futures: Malaysia's Journey Towards Vibrant, Prosperous and Happy Communities

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As the global community commemorates World Rural Development Day 2026 under the theme “Toward Vibrant, Prosperous and Happy Rural Communities,” - we are reminded that rural development is not merely about building roads, bridges or basic infrastructure. It is about building lives. It is about creating opportunities, strengthening communities and ensuring that no one is left behind in the journey of national progress.

For Malaysia, rural development has always been more than a policy agenda. It is a national commitment.

Our rural communities are not passive recipients of development. They are the backbone of national resilience, the guardians of our values and active contributors to Malaysia's economic and social progress. With this conviction, Malaysia continues to pursue a comprehensive and integrated approach through the **National Rural Development Policy 2030**, which provides a long-term framework for inclusive, sustainable and future-ready rural development for Malaysia's 8.1 million rural population.

Malaysia's experience has shown that true rural transformation cannot be measured by physical infrastructure alone. Roads, bridges, housing, water supply, electricity and connectivity remain essential foundations. But beyond these, we must continue to strengthen human capital, expand economic opportunities and enhance the overall well-being of rural communities.

Over the years, Malaysia has made meaningful progress in improving rural connectivity and access to essential services. At the same time, entrepreneurship development programmes, community-based economic initiatives and digital commerce platforms have enabled rural entrepreneurs to reach wider markets and create new sources of income.

We have also placed strong emphasis on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), youth development, women's empowerment and lifelong learning. These efforts are important to ensure that rural communities are not left behind in a world increasingly shaped by knowledge, technology and innovation.

The impact of these comprehensive interventions is clearly reflected in our socio-economic progress. Over the past five decades, we have witnessed a profound transformation in rural well-being, with the average monthly gross household income in rural areas rising remarkably from just RM200 in 1970 to RM5,669 in 2024. This upward trajectory is a testament to our unwavering commitment to uplifting rural livelihoods.

Equally significant is the positive shift in our demographic trends. Between 2022 and 2024, the migration flow from rural to urban areas declined sharply from 2.4% to 0.5%.

This growing retention of our rural population is a clear indicator that our efforts to expand viable employment opportunities and enhance modern facilities are successfully transforming our rural areas into attractive, thriving places to live and work.

One important lesson from Malaysia's rural development journey is that there is no single model for transformation. Every village, district and rural community has its own strengths, resources and aspirations. Effective rural policies must therefore be grounded in local realities, while unlocking the potential that already exists within the community itself.

As we look ahead, rural development will continue to face a rapidly changing landscape shaped by climate change, technological disruption, demographic shifts and global economic uncertainty. These challenges require governments and development partners to be more adaptive, innovative and collaborative.

In Malaysia, we are increasingly leveraging digital technologies, data-driven planning and new innovations to improve policy design and service delivery. But while tools and technologies may change, our guiding principle remains the same: development must always be people-centred, inclusive and sustainable.

At the heart of Malaysia's rural development journey is a simple belief - development should ultimately be measured by the lives it improves, the opportunities it creates and the hope it inspires.

Success is not defined only by the number of projects completed, but by the extent to which rural communities are empowered to shape a better future for themselves, their families and the generations to come.

As we celebrate World Rural Development Day 2026, Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to working closely with regional and international partners, including CIRDAP, in advancing innovative and sustainable rural development solutions.

Together, we must continue to build rural communities that are vibrant, prosperous, resilient and prosper.