

NEWSLETTER

Advancing Social Development
through Community Empowerment



APPGM-SDG

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH SUSTAINABLE ACTION: TRANSFORMING LIVES IN IPOH BARAT

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EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH SUSTAINABLE ACTION: TRANSFORMING LIVES IN IPOH BARAT

By YB Tuan M. Kulasegaran a/l V. Murugeson
(Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform); Member of Parliament for Ipoh Barat)

Communities that were once left behind in my constituency are now beginning to live with renewed dignity, confidence, and hope. For many of them, being heard and included in development efforts has restored a sense of purpose and belief that their livelihoods can improve through meaningful and sustainable support. Sustainable support would not be possible without a committed organisation who is willing to work and articulate issues related to grassroot communities.



My journey with the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia on Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG) began in 2021, when the organisation approached me through the NGO, Association for Welfare, Community and Dialogue to conduct a community mapping exercise in my parliamentary constituency of Ipoh Barat. I welcomed the team with open arms and an open heart, recognising the importance of understanding grassroots realities in order to create effective and lasting solutions.

Over the course of three days, the APPGM-SDG team visited various underserved communities, including residents of PPR flats and squatter settlements. They engaged directly with local NGOs and conducted focus group discussions to better understand the issues faced by the communities. Their work involved carefully documenting ground realities, listening to the voices of the people, and producing comprehensive reports that reflected the genuine concerns of the rakyat.

What impressed me most was their collaborative and diplomatic approach. APPGM-SDG facilitated discussions with relevant government agencies, shared the findings from the mapping exercise, and worked constructively to encourage practical solutions to local issues. I participated in many of these discussions and found their methodology to be deeply rooted in community engagement, evidence-based documentation, and innovative SDG-driven solutions developed together with the local communities.

As a Member of Parliament, I constantly face the challenge of addressing complex community concerns, ranging from drainage and housing issues to land rights, environmental challenges, and broader socio-economic struggles. Through my collaboration with APPGM-SDG, I was able to leverage their expertise and resources to address some of these pressing issues, particularly in improving the socio-economic well-being of B40 communities within Ipoh Barat.

One significant initiative was the establishment of a community-based urban farm in Kampung Tai Lee, a squatter settlement comprising 25 families, many of whom are senior citizens facing the threat of eviction. As both a Member of Parliament and a lawyer, I

successfully obtained a stay order that temporarily prevented the eviction of these families. Together with APPGM-SDG, we engaged with the Ipoh Land Office, Ipoh City Council, and the Perak State Government to advocate for proper housing solutions should relocation eventually become necessary. Discussions on this matter are ongoing, and I remain hopeful that these families will ultimately be provided with safer and more dignified housing.



In the meantime, our discussions with the state government and local council led to an effort to create sustainable income-generating opportunities for the community. Through this collaboration, the Ipoh City Council under the leadership then Dato' Rumaizi Baharin secured a parcel of land in Kampung Tai Lee for the development of an urban farming initiative. APPGM-SDG fully supported the idea and provided the necessary funding to launch the project in 2023.

Today, the project known as the Ipoh Model Farm is progressing encouragingly. Approximately 15 senior men and women are actively managing the farm with continuous support from the APPGM-SDG Ipoh team. The participants now earn a modest monthly income ranging from RM160 to RM200. While the amount may appear small to some, it has made a meaningful difference in the lives of these senior citizens by helping them regain financial earnings, dignity, and a renewed sense of purpose.



Beyond the Ipoh Model Farm initiative, APPGM-SDG has actively spearheaded numerous community led driven projects aimed at strengthening the local economy across Ipoh Barat. These initiatives are

designed to empower residents, enhance socio-economic resilience, and foster sustainable community development within the district.

Since 2021, the organisation has implemented 19 micro SDG projects involving women, youths, school students, football clubs, senior citizens, and urban farming communities. These projects have covered diverse areas such as sports development, digital literacy, tailoring, culinary and bakery skills, entrepreneurship, cultural preservation, food security, as well as health and wellness programs.

Collectively, these initiatives have reached and empowered nearly 600 individuals from B40 communities across my constituency. More importantly, APPGM-SDG's strong monitoring mechanisms and continuous engagement ensure that these programs remain sustainable and community-driven long after implementation.

I continue to work closely with APPGM-SDG through initiatives such as the Ipoh Modal Farm and look forward to seeing even greater progress in empowering vulnerable communities. Sustainable development is not merely about providing temporary assistance; it is about building resilient communities that are capable of standing on their own feet with dignity and confidence.

The collaboration between APPGM-SDG and the communities of Ipoh Barat demonstrates that meaningful change is possible when development is people-centered, inclusive, and sustainable. By listening to the voices of ordinary citizens, empowering local leadership, and creating opportunities for self-reliance, we are not only addressing immediate socio-economic challenges but also restoring hope and human dignity.

True empowerment goes beyond financial aid or short-term assistance. It lies in equipping communities with the tools, opportunities, and confidence to shape their own future. When communities are empowered, they become resilient, independent, and capable of thriving without relying solely on government handouts.

As we continue this journey, I remain committed to working alongside APPGM-SDG and all relevant stakeholders to ensure that no community is left behind. Together, we can build a more compassionate, inclusive, and sustainable future for the people of Ipoh Barat and beyond.



BUILDING A FAIRER SOCIETY THROUGH SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

Special Feature Column

In a world of mounting socioeconomic challenges, communities everywhere are looking to move away from market-driven models towards an economy where benefits are shared among members and reinvested locally. Increasingly, the social and solidarity economy (SSE) has emerged as the answer these communities are looking for.

What is SSE?

A concept rooted in human history of mutual aid, collective action, and cooperation, SSE encompasses enterprises and organisations that serve the collective interest through voluntary cooperation and democratic governance, always placing people and social goals ahead of profit when using what they earn and own.

In Malaysia, SSE traces its roots to mutual aid practices and the spirit of *gotong-royong*—cooperative action in community life. Cultural and religious traditions have also long shaped communities' understanding of development as a process that transcends material gain. From this context, initiatives such as cooperative societies and faith-infused financial and credit models have helped shape the country's economic landscape.

APPGM-SDG's Role in Strengthening SSE in Malaysia

Since commencing our SDG localisation work, APPGM-SDG has played a key role in expanding Malaysia's SSE landscape. Between 2022-2025, we have supported 1,425 micro projects addressing local needs across 143 parliamentary constituencies—many of which embody SSE principles. These projects, executed by 1,009 Solution Providers, have benefited around 43,000 individuals from local communities in different locations.

The success of these projects lies in our bottom-up model, where we partner with communities over the long term, supporting project execution not only financially but building their capacities to remain sustainable. Projects are also assessed for their SDG-aligned impacts to ensure they contribute to the global goals from the grassroots level.

APPGM-SDG also provides platforms for the projects' outputs and products to be marketed and showcased to the wider community—for example through the successful TAMU SDG event held in parliament from 1 to 2 December last year. Further, their impact on communities is documented as evidence for policy discussions at every level, from local to national.

Establishment of Koperasi Matlamat Pembangunan Lestari Berhad

To further strengthen the ecosystem that we have built in partnership with the communities, deeper institutionalisation is needed. The establishment of the SDG Cooperative (Koperasi Matlamat Pembangunan Lestari Berhad) on 10 April 2025 offers a concrete path forward. The SDG Cooperative would embed SSE principles into a formal structure, enable



The ASEAN SDG-SSE Forum 2026 on 20 - 21 May 2026.

consistent impact monitoring, and provide a replicable model for grassroots development nationwide.



SDG Cooperative Annual Grand Meeting (AGM) on 7th April 2026.

In addition, the SDG Cooperative will help deepen market access for our community products and promote a more inclusive value chain. It will also bring together local products, consolidating supply from across communities to meet volume and quality demands. And it will act as a formal legal entity, bridging grassroots enterprises to the private sector for commercial partnerships and investments.

SSE in the Thirteenth Malaysia Plan

SSE has also received a boost from the government's recent recognition of the third sector and social economy as a strategic driver of economic growth under the Thirteenth Malaysia Plan (13MP). This recognition prioritises making the economy more human-centred and not solely focused on material growth, alongside introducing a dedicated social economy policy for clear, integrated national direction.

This development serves as a golden opportunity for APPGM-SDG to further strengthen our role in promoting SSE at the national policymaking level. To support the successful implementation of the 13MP, we have recently launched a four-level grassroots monitoring initiative, led by our policy think tank, MySDG Centre for Social Inclusion (MySDG-CSI).

The monitoring framework, refined with input from our civil society partners, will be carried out by mobilising our grassroots network nationwide. It covers ten domains aligned with 13MP focus areas, including SSE as one domain. Preceding the monitoring is a grassroots training module on Citizenship Rights and 13MP, implemented since February this year to raise awareness and transform our local network members into monitoring agents.

ASEAN SDG-SSE Roadmap

Beyond Malaysia, we also play a key role in supporting SSE advancement at the regional level. Beginning 2026, MySDG-CSI in partnership with MySDG Academy and Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC) will implement the ASEAN SDG-SSE Roadmap (2026-2030), coordinating joint regional civil society initiatives to strengthen SSE's contribution to inclusive, people-centred ASEAN development.

The Roadmap was developed last year during the ASEAN SDG-SSE Forum held in Kuala Lumpur from 26 to 27 May, in conjunction with Malaysia's chairmanship of the regional body. It is the outcome of a collective effort by our partners across ASEAN countries. The Roadmap outlines five goals and 31 targets, comprehensively addressing pathways to uplift socioeconomic well-being of communities engaged in SSE initiatives across the region.

Conclusion

From local communities to national policy and regional cooperation, APPGM-SDG continues to advance SSE at every level. These interconnected efforts reflect a sustained commitment to building an economy rooted in solidarity, inclusion, shared benefits, and fairness.



MySDG Academy held the Follow-Up Meeting on Third Sector Empowerment on 23 April 2026 at Garden Spring Cheras which centred on Social Economy and the Role of the Third Sector.

*By Dr. Khairil Ahmad
(MySDG Centre for Social Inclusion)*

SPECIAL COVERAGE ON THE ASEAN SDG-SSE ROADMAP



REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON PROSPERITY THROUGH SOLIDARITY

Accelerating the ASEAN SSE-SDG Roadmap

May 20 -21, 2026

DRIVING REGIONAL PROSPERITY: ASEAN-WIDE REGIONAL SDG-SSE CONFERENCE 2026 HIGHLIGHTS

As the global community enters the final five-year countdown toward the United Nations 2030 Agenda, the ASEAN region has taken a monumental leap forward in redefining economic resilience. On May 20–21, 2026, building on the outcomes of the 2025 SDG-SSE Forum organised by APPGM-SDG in Kuala Lumpur, the highly anticipated **Regional Conference on Prosperity through Solidarity 2026: Accelerating the ASEAN SSE-SDG Roadmap** convened online, marking a definitive shift from traditional social welfare models to inclusive economic integration. The Conference was hosted in the Philippines as the country is chairing ASEAN this year, giving the event a symbolic regional impetus.

Operating as a flagship event of the ASEAN 2026 Economic Pillar under the overarching theme *“Navigating the Future: The Social and Solidarity Economy as a Driver of ASEAN Prosperity”*, the forum successfully aligned the government sector, international agencies, policy makers, and civil society. Under the diplomatic framework of the Philippines’ 2026 ASEAN Chairmanship, the conference served as the official implementation vehicle for the historic **ASEAN SDG-SSE Roadmap (2026–2030)**, launched as an outcome of the 2025 Forum in Malaysia.



Central to this milestone achievement was the collaborative leadership of **APPGM-SDG** and **MySDG Academy**, which stepped into the international spotlight as one of the core co-host and programmatic architects.

Multilateral Collaboration and Global Recognition

The success of the forum was the culmination of meticulous, multi-month preparation across borders. In the lead-up to the event, **APPGM-SDG**, **MySDG Academy**, the **National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC)**, the **Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC)**, and the **Bayan Family of Foundations (BFF)** conducted series of cross-border exchanges and virtual consultations to align the diverse needs of member states. This inclusive preparatory work ensured that the forum went far beyond a mere dialogue, laying down a highly practical roadmap for localised implementation.



This rigorous groundwork drew significant high-level validation. The conference opened with an inspiring welcome address by the host city’s leadership - **Mayor Joy Belmonte of Quezon City, Philippines** - who championed local government units as the “anchor institutions” needed to create stable markets for grassroots communities. This political mandate

further solidified by keynote speeches from top-tier national executives, including **President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.** and NAPC Lead Convenor **Secretary Lope B. Santos III**, signaling absolute institutional backing for the region's third-sector transformation.

The forum was also defined by an extraordinary diversity of voices. The initiative brought together over 200 top executives, policy leaders, ASEAN sectoral body representatives, and international SSE practitioners to align regional stakeholders and mobilise commitments for transformative change. This was over a two-day online exchange. The platform featured eight panel discussions, hosted over the two days with about 35 speakers from over 10 countries.

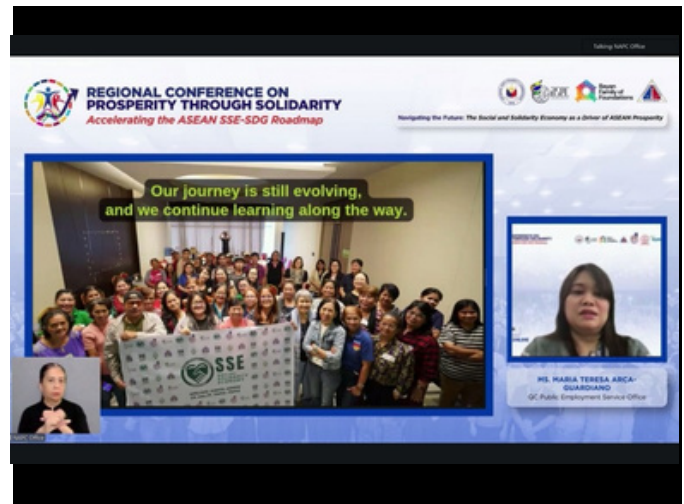
Deep Dive: MySDG Academy and Partners Network on Stakeholder Mobilisation

A major focal point of Day 1 was Panel 2: ASEAN SDG-SSE Roadmap 2026-2030: Components and Results of Stakeholder Mobilisation, masterfully moderated by Ms. Zoel Ng, Director of MySDG Academy.

Under her guidance, the session dissected the 5 core goals and 31 targets of the dedicated 5- year regional roadmap launched in January 2026, exploring exactly how to translate high-level intergovernmental targets into localised action. The discussion featured a powerhouse lineup of regional voices:

- Dr. Eri Trinurini (Chair of ASEC and Asian Representative on the RIPESS Board, Indonesia) detailed strategies for cross-border alignment, emphasising how regional supply chains can deliberately incorporate social enterprises.
- Ms. Maria Teresa Arca-Guardiano (Officer-in-Charge, Special Projects Division, Quezon City PESO, the Philippines) shared practical experience of government-supported work with grassroots and social enterprises.
- Dr. Victor P. Karunan (Senior Visiting Lecturer at International Development Studies Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok) mapped out the data frameworks required to systematically measure stakeholder commitments across member states.
- Rully N. Amrullah (Executive Director of the Indonesian Philanthropy Alliance) commented on the sharing, noting the critical importance of bridging the gap with grassroots and rural communities on the way to building prosperity through solidarity.

Panel 2 emerged as a vital bridge, resolving how state governments, academic entities, and local communities can co-invest human and financial resources into a unified regional ecosystem.



Spotlighting Grassroots Empowerment: Public, Private & Civil Society Partnership in Building the SSE Ecosystem

Another enriching session for the forum's programmatic depth was a sharing spotlighting the cross-sector partnerships, featuring **Nur Farah Ezzaty**, Project Management Department Director at APPGM-SDG.

"Genuine partnership does not happen by accident. It requires formal structure, or even a regular dialogue." With these words, Ms. Farah Ezzaty shared the practical experience of multistakeholder partnership at APPGM-SDG, with efforts focused on localising the action and building the SSE Ecosystem from the ground up. She emphasised the current efforts on mainstreaming the third sector under the 13th Malaysian Plan. Sustainable development cannot merely treat local communities as passive beneficiaries; instead, it must build their capacity to become partners in accelerating the development.

"SSE is a systemic economic transformation, and the time is now," she shared.

Financial & Public Policy Breakthroughs

Beyond mobilisation, the forum delivered heavy technical contributions in the realms of finance and structural policy. Panel 5, Conducive Public Policies for Strengthening SSE, featuring **Dr. Khairil Ahmad** (Director of the MySDG Centre for Social Inclusion) alongside UN-ESCAP's **Marta Perez Cuso**, charted out how legislative frameworks can actively protect and scale the third sector. He shared that policy stands as a foundation for action. "Across all our policy work, we have highlighted the issues and challenges faced by enterprises on the ground. These practical insights are crucial, especially in the process of developing the Social Solidarity Economy."

During Panel 7, Innovations in Social Impact Assessment of SSE Entities, Dr. Khairil Ahmad and Mr. **Paniirselvam Jayaraman** (Director of Policy Solutions Department at APPGM-SDG) presented advanced research toolkits, offering clear indicators for tracking SSE contributions to national SDG grids. Mr. Paniirselvam highlighted that the establishment of multistakeholder SDG committees at the local level strengthens participation and accountability, and shared how APPGM-SDG is committed to supporting the flow of community-level data to national policymakers

Looking Ahead: The October 2026 Onsite Summit and Beyond

The momentum built during this virtual executive forum is already being channeled into the next phase of regional diplomacy. Joint working groups are currently transmitting the forum’s resolutions to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to formally solidify these outcomes within the official ASEAN Economic Pillar Calendar.

These milestones will culminate in a massive, full-scale Provisional Onsite Conference in October 2026 at the Quezon City M.I.C.E. Center, expected to gather between 500 and 1,000 delegates to finalise the operational mechanics of the People’s Bayanihan Fund. Concurrently, MySDG Academy and APPGM-SDG will champion these regional priorities (Social economy and Mainstreaming third sector) at the upcoming Malaysian Youth SDG Summit 2026, conducting extensive work on preparation of the dedicated youth-driven policy paper.

Through deeply interconnected, multilateral commitments, the combined forces of APPGM-SDG, MySDG Academy, NAPC, ASSEC, and BFF ensure that the integration of the Social and Solidarity Economy will leave an indelible, structural legacy across the region - fostering an economic community that is genuinely inclusive, resilient, and people-centred.

*By Zoel Ng & Saparguly Mahtumov
(MySDG Academy)*

Launch meeting

Group of Friends on the Social and Solidarity Economy

11 June 2026, 10:45-12:00 CEST
Room VIII, R2 South, ILO Headquarters
Geneva, Switzerland

Languages: English, French, Spanish

Co-convened by:

- GOVERNO DO BRASIL - MINISTERIO DO TRABALHO E EMPREGO
- Gobierno de Colombia
- GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN - MINISTERIO DE TRABAJO Y ECONOMIA SOCIAL

Partners: UN, ILO, Global Coalition for Social Justice

About the meeting

The Governments of Brazil, Colombia and Spain will convene the launch meeting of the Group of Friends on the Social and Solidarity Economy on 11 June 2026 in Geneva, as a contribution to the Global Coalition for Social Justice. The meeting will provide an opportunity for interested governments to mark the establishment of the Group and to hear reflections from social partners and other relevant stakeholders on cooperation concerning the social and solidarity economy.

The Group will provide a voluntary platform for intergovernmental cooperation among interested governments, with a view to promoting the contribution of the social and solidarity economy to decent work, sustainable development and social justice, including through exchange, cooperation and follow-up in relevant multilateral processes.

Register Now



GROWING THE SDGs FROM THE SOIL UP



The Social Lab did not begin as a large project; it began as a quiet belief. In 2021, I asked myself a question: *what if a platform could grow from the ground up becoming a trusted community reference point, a space where knowledge flows between universities, cooperatives, and communities, shaped by local wisdom, and sustained through shared responsibility?* At that time, the Social Lab existed only as an idea intentionally designed and carefully planned, rooted in real community needs and the surrounding environment.

By 2022, the Social Lab moved from concept to reality. We started with a single greenhouse, which became both a physical and social space where communities could gather, learn, and experiment together. It was established as a platform for experience-sharing and education, using organic farming as a practical entry point to address food security, health, and livelihoods. This marked a turning point from intention to action, and from planning to trust-building.

There were obstacles along the way. Many people doubted the efficacy and financial worth of organic techniques, therefore their introduction necessitated patience. Our resiliency was put to the test by a lack of resources, difficulties in managing water, and the need to combine environmental protection with the demands of daily income. The Social Lab method, which relies on learning by doing, adjusting to local realities, and making sure that solutions were community-owned instead of imposed from outside, was bolstered by these problems.

By 2023, the Social Lab had evolved into a structured model focused on management and organic farming practices. Community members were elevated from mere participants to co-managers of the system. Beyond crop production, students learned how to organise and manage a farm, maintain records, operate basic business activities, practise good hygiene, and manage resources effectively. During this phase, accountability was strengthened, productivity increased, and decent employment opportunities were created, particularly for women and young people.



By 2024, scalability increased alongside trust and capacity. With the support of APPGM-SDG, the Social Lab expanded to 30 greenhouses, cultivating more than 40 types of vegetables. Improved access to nutritious food enhanced household health, while better water and soil management practices reinforced environmental sustainability. Education also shifted from a focus on short-term outcomes to continuous and practical learning, emphasising long-term behavioural change among participants.



Voices from the Grassroots

By 2025, the Social Lab advanced its mission further through the development of Social Lab: TaniKu, which integrated community learning with a community-based agribusiness model. Through TaniKu, organic farming was reframed from a subsistence activity into a respected, sustainable, and financially viable livelihood. Equipped with knowledge of markets, value chains, pricing strategies, and collective marketing, communities were empowered to participate confidently and competitively in the local economy.

Social Lab expanded beyond fresh produce to create Taniku, a line of value-added products made from organic materials sourced directly from their farms. Communities began producing natural soaps, dried fruits such as pineapple, and other processed organic products, reducing post-harvest losses while increasing product value and income potential. This shift from raw production to value creation strengthened local supply chains, created new employment opportunities, and enhanced economic resilience at the grassroots level. Through TaniKu, farming became more than cultivation, it became entrepreneurship. Local economies were strengthened, household incomes improved, and poverty was reduced through a sustainable, community-owned model that links the soil to markets, and learning to lasting livelihoods.

APPGM-SDG has been very important in making this journey stronger. It ties together real-life community experiences with policy discussions to show how integrated, community-led models can help with many SDGs, including ending poverty and hunger, promoting good health and well-being, providing quality education, ensuring clean water and sanitation, promoting decent work and economic growth, building sustainable communities, being responsible with production, and working together to reach the goals.

The Social Lab's most powerful effect is on the people that operate within it. People in the neighbourhood can now confidently make money. Young people see farming as a good job option. Communities go from depending on others to being able to do things on their own.

This journey continues with one guiding belief, sustainable development is not delivered it is cultivated. Through the Social Lab, the SDGs are no longer distant global commitments, but lived realities, grown through trust, strengthened by partnerships, and sustained by collective learning.



*By Nathaniel Maikol
(APPGM-SDG Solution Provider)*

UN Adopts Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) as a Strategy for Accelerating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030

United Nations (UN) released three (3) documents to mainstreaming SSE for the localisation of the SDGs:

- 1st UN Resolution on SSE
- UN Secretary-General's Report on SSE
- 2nd UN Resolution on SSE

Read more from a parliament journal here:





GROWING FOOD SECURITY FROM THE SOIL UP: OUR SDG JOURNEY IN DUNGUN



Security and Sustainable Agriculture, whilst simultaneously helping to lower operational costs and enhance the overall resilience of the project.



My journey with the APPGM-SDG began with a clear goal: to strengthen community-level food security through a practical and sustainable agricultural approach. As a Solution Provider (SP) for the Napier grass cultivation and sheep farming project in Kampung Tok Kah, Dungun, Terengganu I have witnessed first-hand how a small grassroots initiative can bring about profound changes for the participants and the local community.

This project also places a strong emphasis on livestock health and welfare. Participants were trained to conduct basic health checks, identify early symptoms of disease, and take preventive actions. This step not only improves the well-being of the sheep, but also helps ensure that livestock productivity remains at a more stable and sustainable level.

In the initial stages, most participants had limited exposure to more systematic farming practices. They relied heavily on traditional methods and commercial animal feed, which inflated operational costs and reduced long-term sustainability. Through this project, we introduced structured activities such as Napier cultivation, silage preparation, regular sheep health checks, and organic waste management. These activities were not merely technical training; they became a learning process that built confidence, work discipline, and a sense of responsibility among the participants.

Throughout the implementation of the project, we also faced several challenges, such as uneven Napier grass growth and less efficient waste management during the initial stages. However, these challenges turned into valuable learning opportunities. Through rescheduling the harvest timelines, utilizing a shredding machine for more uniform silage preparation, and introducing a composting system, we successfully improved farm hygiene and converted waste into organic fertiliser. This directly supports the SDG goals related to environmental sustainability and responsible resource management.

One of the most significant impacts has been the increased self-reliance of the participants. Equipped with the skills to harvest Napier and produce their own silage, they have successfully reduced their dependence on expensive commercial feed. This directly supports the SDG goals related to Food



What is most meaningful to me is witnessing the transformation from a human perspective. Participants who previously lacked confidence have now become more proactive, disciplined, and courageous in making decisions on the ground. Some among them have demonstrated leadership, managed activities, and taken charge of sales and livestock management. This transformation proves that the impact of the SDGs is not merely about figures or reports, but about real changes in the lives, skills, and direction of the participants.

This journey has taught me that sustainable development begins at the grassroots level. With the right guidance, continuous support, and a spirit of community cooperation, small-scale projects can yield lasting change. Our project in Kampung Tok Kah stands as proof that food security, environmental sustainability, and community empowerment can flourish together — starting from one Napier farm and one community at a time.

*By Syahir Ammar Sazely
(APPGM-SDG Solution Provider)*

Organized by:



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YAYASAN HASANAH
A foundation of Khazanah Nasional

RISE x TAMU SDG

"Empowering Communities, Showcasing Impact"

2026

EAST COAST

RISE x TAMU SDG
19-20 JUNE 2026
[Closed Invitation]

TAMU SDG
21 JUNE 2026
Mydin Tunjong
Hypermarket, Kota Bharu

Anjuran APPGM-SDG melalui Dana Kelestarian Rakan APPGM-SDG, Inisiatif Intervensi Dasar

Supported by:



5 5 - 6 MAY 2026



STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN THE NORTHERN ZONE: SDG POLICY INTERVENTION FORUM DRIVES DISTRICT SUSTAINABILITY

From 5 to 6 May 2026, The Light Hotel Penang served as the venue for the Northern Zone SDG Governance and Policy Intervention Forum. Centred around the theme "Strengthening Local Institutions for More Sustainable Governance," the forum gathered over 30 government officials, specifically Officers from the State Secretariat (SUK) Offices, District Officers, Chief Assistant District Officers & Assistant District Officers, as well as representatives from the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER) and the Department of Director General of Lands and Mines. The forum aimed to document best leadership practices among district-level government officials and forge inter-state partnerships across the Northern zone.

Day One (Focus on Strengthening District Governance) commenced with an opening address by TPr. Gs. Mohd Bashir Sulaiman (MBPP), followed by a keynote speech by Dato' Muhamad Mahazi Haji Ibrahim (Deputy State Secretary of Kedah), who emphasised the critical importance of inclusive governance. The first dialogue session discussed the gaps between national policies and community needs, featuring District Officers (DO) and Chief Assistant District Officers (CADO) from Larut Matang and Selama, Kota Setar, Langkawi, alongside the Perlis State Secretariat Office. The first day concluded with a roundtable session to share best practices in localising the SDGs.



Day Two (Confronting Challenges and Translating Policies to the Grassroots) commenced with a socio-economic analysis by Prof. Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr. Noor Azlan Ghazali (MINDA UKM) on Malaysia's future strategic directions. The subsequent dialogue session featured a panel of officials from the Kerian, Padang Terap, Selama, and Kuala Muda District and Land Offices (PDT), focusing on district development centred around people-centric well-being. The highlight of the forum saw a discussion on leadership by example by District Officers from Seberang Perai Tengah, Hilir Perak, Baling, and Bandar Baharu, exploring how to ensure national policies effectively reach the community.

APPGM-SDG Solution Providers also set up an exhibition of social economy products funded by APPGM-SDG, sharing sustainability stories from the APPGM-SDG community programmes. They achieved social economy sales of approximately RM3,000 and opened avenues for social procurement from government offices, in line with the agenda to empower the third sector in the 13th Malaysia Plan (RMK-13).

This programme was organised through the Policy Solutions Initiative, a collaborative effort between APPGM-SDG, Yayasan Hasanah, and the Ministry of Finance.

*By Dr. Thanaraj Murudi & Paniirselvam Jayaraman
(Head of Northern Zone and Director of Policy Solutions Department)*



12 MAY 2026



EMPOWERING THE EAST COAST: SYNERGY BETWEEN APPGM-SDG AND UMK IN DRIVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The Seminar on Community Studies and SDGs in the East Coast Zone: Assessment of Findings in Selected Parliamentary Constituencies was successfully held at Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK), City Campus, Pengkalan Chepa.

The first session of the seminar, moderated by TPr. Nurul Syaza (APPGM-SDG), focused on presenting the findings from the issue mapping and SDG achievement studies across four key parliamentary constituencies, namely Kubang Kerian, Pengkalan Chepa, Jerantut, and Rompin. The presentation was delivered by Dr. Siti Nur Ain and Nur Syadhira from APPGM-SDG. Guest commentator, Dr. Yusmazida Mohd Yusoff (Lecturer at UMK), provided highly insightful commentary regarding the content, methodology, validation of issues, and technical matters concerning the highlighted research outcomes. This session also fostered dynamic, two-way interaction as participants raised critical questions regarding the study's findings while sharing insightful perspectives.

Moving into the second session, the discussion shifted towards a deeper discourse on the future development direction of a prosperous East Coast Zone. The panellists, comprising Prof. Datuk Dr. Denison Jayasooria (Head of the APPGM-SDG Secretariat), Mr. Suharmizi Hamzah (Setiu District Council Member), Dr. Siti Nur Ain, and Muhammad Faris Mohamed Basir (Assistant Administrative Officer (Project Coordinator) of the Bunut Payong State Constituency Service Centre), shared real-life realities from the ground. They emphasised the importance of cohesion in resolving community issues while taking into account mega-local trends that directly impact the lives of local residents.



This academic gathering was further elevated by the presence of UMK's academic leadership, including the Dean of the Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business, Assoc. Prof. Dr Dzulkipli Mukhtar, and the Executive Director of APPGM-SDG, Nur Rahmah Othman. The involvement of diverse stakeholders—ranging from lecturers and postgraduate students to representatives from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)—reflects the strong support for evidence-based development initiatives dedicated to the future well-being of the East Coast Zone.

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





THROUGH THE SOUTHERN ZONE LENS: DRIVING THE SDG AGENDA WITH LOCAL COORDINATORS

“The nation requires more social scientists working on policy solutions tailored to grassroots needs.” – Prof. Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria

A session to share findings and the work progress of the Southern Zone Local Coordinators (LC) was held at the Impiana Hotel, Senai. This session served as an important platform to assess the progress of initiatives implemented on the ground, share experiences across states, and reinforce the role of LCs in supporting community-based sustainable development agendas.

The discussions focused on aligning local issues and needs with national-level development agendas. This included evaluating the issue-resolution process, the effectiveness of implemented interventions, and efforts to strengthen coordination among various agencies and stakeholders. This approach aims to ensure that issues raised by the community are effectively translated into more structured, responsive, and high-impact actions.



Among the key lessons highlighted were the importance of referencing the Doha Declaration within the social development agenda, the necessity of strengthening community-based issue-resolution platforms, and enhancing the readiness and receptiveness of District Officers (DOs) towards the role of Local Coordinators (LCs) as strategic partners in local development. The discussion also touched upon the importance of building more integrated issue-resolution mechanisms through close inter-agency cooperation, thereby reducing functional overlaps and accelerating follow-up actions on identified issues.

The session also provided a space for the exchange of experiences and best practices between states, particularly regarding the management of community issues, fieldwork data collection, the implementation of social interventions, and programme impact monitoring. These shared insights helped broaden the participants' perspectives on approaches that can be adapted to the specific context and needs of each area, while simultaneously strengthening the collaborative network among LCs in the Southern Zone.

Furthermore, participants emphasised the importance of using fieldwork data and community-based evidence to support decision-making processes. Information obtained through direct engagement with the community not only helps identify the root causes of an issue but also serves as the foundation for proposed solutions that are more targeted, practical, and sustainable. This evidence-based approach is seen as vital in ensuring that policies and programmes are designed to truly meet community needs and deliver measurable impact.

These efforts are implemented through the Policy Intervention Initiative driven by APPGM-SDG in collaboration with Yayasan Hasanah and the Ministry of Finance. The session also benefited from the input and insights of Prof. Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria, Ms Nur Rahmah, Dr Teo Lee Ken, Dr Wan Asiah Nurjannah, and other members of the APPGM-SDG team.

Ultimately, this sharing session proves that resolving community issues requires close cooperation between the public, government agencies, local authorities, academic institutions, and civil society organisations. With continuous support from various stakeholders, LCs—acting as influencers and strategic links between the community and decision-makers—are expected to continue playing a pivotal role in driving development that is more responsive, inclusive, and aligned with the aspirations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the local level.

*By Siti Noraiyash Rohim
(Head of the Southern Zone)*

UPCOMING APPGM-SDG PROGRAMME

Launching of

FOUR APPGM-SDG POLICY RECOMMENDATION REPORT

FOR PARLIAMENTARY LEVEL 2026

25 JUNE 2026 | PARLIAMENT OF MALAYSIA

1. **Food Security: The Challenges of Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness in Sarawak**
2. **Strengthening the Vital Role of Farmers in Building Food Security and Safety for National Health**
3. **From Coastal Ecosystem to Harvest: Strengthening Food Security and National Sovereignty through Sustainable Management of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems**
4. **Empowering Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Programmes: Strategies to Strengthen the Care Economy and Inclusivity of People with Disabilities in Malaysia**



FORUM INTERVENSI DASAR MATLAMAT PEMBANGUNAN MAMPAN PARA PENGGERAK DASAR DAN PENTADBIRAN

ZON PANTAI TIMUR

15 & 16 JUNE 2026



FORUM KEPIMPINAN DAN AMALAN TERBAIK TADBIR URUS TEMPATAN

WILAYAH SABAH

29-30 JUNE 2026

THEME

Empowering Local Leadership in Localising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



19 MAY 2026



BRIDGING LAW AND TRADITION IN SARAWAK REGION: DIALOGUE ON LEGAL PLURALISM & NATIVE CUSTOMARY RIGHTS

We were honoured to host Prof. Dr. Ramy Bulan for a special lecture on Legal Pluralism and Native Customary Rights (NCR) Land Law in Sarawak. The session gathered participants from diverse professional, academic, and community backgrounds, serving both as a valuable refresher on NCR jurisprudence and an introduction to the legal complexities surrounding indigenous land governance in Sarawak. The lecture provided an overview of the legal foundations underpinning Native Customary Rights, tracing the development of landmark judicial decisions that continue to shape contemporary NCR litigation. Particular attention was given to the relationship between common law, constitutional protections, statutory provisions, and judicial interpretation in determining the recognition and protection of indigenous customary rights.

The discussion commenced with an examination of international legal principles relating to indigenous peoples, drawing comparative insights from jurisdictions such as Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and Malaysia. Through these comparisons, participants were introduced to the concept of “aboriginal title” and its relevance to indigenous land rights within common law jurisdictions, while highlighting the different

approaches adopted in balancing historical occupation, customary governance systems, and modern development imperatives.

The session then narrowed its focus to Sarawak, where legal pluralism remains a defining feature of the legal landscape. Legal pluralism refers to the coexistence of multiple legal systems within the same social space, particularly the interaction between statutory law and indigenous customary law. This duality is most evident in the governance of NCR land, where formal legal frameworks intersect with long-established community-based norms, customs, and traditional land management practices.

To contextualise legal pluralism within the Malaysian legal framework, the lecture examined the foundations of Malaysian law, including written law, common law principles, judicial precedents, and customs recognised within the rule of law. The discussion highlighted the principle that law must remain responsive to local realities and cultural contexts. In Sarawak, this is reflected in the Sarawak Land Code, particularly Section 5, which provides the statutory basis for the recognition of Native Customary Rights (NCR).

A detailed explanation was provided on key customary tenure concepts, including *pemakai menoa* (territorial domain), *tanah umai* (cultivated lands), *tembawai* (former longhouse settlement sites), *pendam* (burial grounds), and *pulau galau* (communal forest reserves). These concepts illustrate the relationship between land, identity, customary governance, and community well-being, extending beyond conventional notions of individual land ownership.



The lecture also explored a number of contemporary challenges associated with NCR governance. These included ambiguities surrounding perimeter surveys, and land demarcation processes, legal debates over the recognition of *pemakai menoa* and *pulau galau*, increasing pressures on forest-dependent livelihoods, intergenerational challenges related to land inheritance and fragmentation, and the growing disengagement of younger generations from customary land management systems. The session also examined issues arising from competing land use priorities, including matters relating to road access, mobility, market access, and the practical exercise of customary rights.

Significant judicial developments, including *TR Sandhak Tabau & Ors v Director of Forest, Sarawak & Anor* and the subsequent 2019 Federal Court review, were examined as illustrations of the legal complexities involved in balancing statutory provisions, common law principles, and indigenous customary practices.



Throughout the session, it was emphasised that NCR issues are not solely legal questions but are deeply interconnected with broader sustainable development concerns, including poverty, inequality, environmental sustainability, institutional trust, and community resilience. The lecture underscored the importance of strengthening understanding of legal pluralism among policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and community leaders to ensure that legal and development frameworks remain responsive to the lived realities of indigenous communities in Sarawak.

Acknowledgement

APPGM-SDG extends its sincere appreciation to Prof. Dr. Ramy Bulan for sharing her expertise and insights during this special lecture. We are grateful for the opportunity to benefit from her extensive scholarship and longstanding contributions to the field of indigenous and customary law, which have significantly shaped legal discourse in Malaysia. We also welcome her continued academic contributions through her association with Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) and look forward to future opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing.

We also extend our appreciation to the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM), Sarawak Branch; Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS); Tun Jugah Foundation (TJF); Sarawak Development Institute (SDI); Sarawak Dayak Iban Association (SADIA); Dayak Bidayuh National Association (DBNA); Datu Ose Murang; Datin Dr. Valerie Mashman; as well as APPGM-SDG's Solution Providers and Local Coordinators and lawyers across Sarawak for their participation and support of the Siri Randau Sarawak.



*By Raine Melissa Riman & Maurice Josaphat Jepun
(Head of Sarawak Region &
Local Coordinator for P213 Mukah)*

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CENTRAL ZONE SYNERGY: EMPOWERING MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE FOR SHARED SUSTAINABILITY

From 19 to 20 May 2026, the APPGM-SDG Secretariat, in collaboration with Yayasan Hasanah and the Ministry of Finance, and supported by the Ministry of Economy, successfully organised the 2026 Central Zone SDG Governance and Leadership Forum at The Zenith Hotel, Putrajaya. This two-day forum served as a strategic platform under the District-Level Multi-Agency Policy Intervention Initiative to strengthen the SDG localisation agenda through a multi-level governance approach.

In line with the objective of translating the spirit of multi-level governance, the forum successfully brought together policy drivers and agencies from various tiers. A total of 67 participants from diverse agencies registered alongside 11 panellists. These participants and panellists comprised top regional leadership, District Officers, Local Authorities (PBT), federal and state agencies, international development partners, NGOs, and academia, thereby reflecting a collective commitment to strengthening sustainable development governance at the zonal level.

The forum was officially opened by Tan Sri Prof. Dr Noorul Ainur Mohd. Nur, Chairman of UCYP University and Professor at the Jeffrey Sachs Center for Sustainable Development. Throughout the two days, the programme was packed with panel sessions and the sharing of fieldwork data by an exceptional line-up of panellists. In addition, a workshop on strengthening smart collaboration was held to further deepen the understanding of the importance of cooperation and information sharing. The momentum continued on the second day with Keynote Addresses from Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed and Ms Raja Nor Dianna, followed by a Roundtable Dialogue on smart collaboration models.

The highlight of the forum was graced by a Keynote Address from YB Puan Hannah Yeoh, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories). She emphasised the critical importance of data readiness and sharing, as well as cross-agency cooperation spanning federal, state, and local authorities, alongside private corporate bodies and NGOs. Finally, the forum was officially closed by Dato' Sri Hajah Rohani Abdul Karim. It is hoped that this forum will serve as a master reference for policy actions dedicated to the future well-being of the community.



By TPr. Nurul Syaza Mazelan
(Head of Central Zone)

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19 - 22 MAY 2026



DELVING INTO GRASSROOTS VOICES IN SABAH: UNCOVERING COMMUNITY CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCE IN BATU SAPI

The Batu Sapi Parliamentary constituency is one of the constituencies in Sabah located within the Sandakan district, featuring a diverse landscape that encompasses urban, suburban, coastal, water village, and island areas. The unique geography and demographics of this area make Batu Sapi rich in fishery resources and cultural diversity, with communities that rely heavily on the informal sector and natural resources as their primary source of income. However, despite rapid urban development in several areas, there remain communities facing various challenges related to access to basic facilities, economic opportunities, documentation, education, and social well-being; this makes the area a critical focus for a more inclusive and sustainable development agenda.

From 19 to 22 May 2026, the APPGM-SDG research team, led by Mc Jeanet alongside researchers Nor Amirul, Dr. Teo Sue Ann, Mohd Ikram, and Sitti Aisyah Orlando, conducted an issue mapping exercise in the Batu Sapi constituency. This process involved field visits as well as dialogue sessions and discussions with communities at several selected locations, including island villages, water villages, coastal areas, and rural settlements. This mapping aimed to understand the actual challenges faced by the local community, identify development gaps, and ensure that proposed interventions are more effectively based on community needs.

The issue mapping conducted across several villages within the Batu Sapi Parliamentary constituency highlights the reality of coastal and island communities that continue to face basic development



challenges. Despite the beauty of the natural environment and the abundance of marine resources, many residents still struggle with limited access to clean water supply, electricity, road connectivity, and basic facilities. For some residents in island areas and water villages, meeting daily needs such as securing clean water requires high costs and significant sacrifices of time, as they are forced to purchase and transport water by boat every day. At the same time, some villages still rely on generators for electricity, further driving up an already high cost of living.



The livelihoods of the communities in Batu Sapi are also deeply intertwined with the fisheries sector; however, this sector is increasingly exposed to various challenges. Fishermen face volatile incomes due to weather factors, rising petrol costs, boat engine breakdowns, as well as various regulatory constraints and restricted fishing zones. Furthermore,

some community members highlighted that changes to the river and marine ecosystems have reduced fish yields, which previously served as the primary source of household income. Within this fragile economic state, many fishermen admit they do not possess emergency savings, as their daily income is only sufficient to meet their families' basic needs.



In addition to economic challenges, documentation issues and access to basic services remain among the primary problems having a prolonged impact on the community. The lack of identification documents has caused some children to drop out of education, made it difficult for youths to secure formal employment, and restricted access to government assistance. At the same time, healthcare access remains a challenge, with some villages only receiving mobile clinic visits a few times a year or having to bear high

transportation costs to seek medical treatment. This situation demonstrates that poverty at the grassroots level is not merely an income issue, but also involves limited access to basic rights and services.

Despite facing various challenges, the communities in Batu Sapi continue to demonstrate resilience and a strong drive to develop their own areas. Some villages have begun exploring community-based eco-tourism, empowering fisheries activities, producing local goods, and developing youth potential in sports. However, these aspirations require more structured support from various stakeholders through infrastructure development, training, community capacity building, and more inclusive policy solutions. This issue mapping exercise proves that grassroots voices must continue to be heard, as sustainable development can only be achieved when the needs of local communities are truly understood and prioritised.

*By Mc Jeanet Lempisik @ Marx
(Head of Sabah Region)*

CONGRATULATIONS TO APPGM-SDG STAFF

"Congratulations to our colleagues taking on fellowship and lecturing roles—we are incredibly proud of your commitment to nurturing the next generation of leaders while driving our mission forward."



Prof. Datuk Dr. Denison Jayasooria

Head of Secretariat

AS

Adjunct Professor at Asia e University

Honorary Professor at Institute of Ethnic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)



Dr. Teo Lee Ken

Director, Constituency Coordination Department

AS

Part Time Lecturer at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)

Professional Fellow at KSI Strategic Institute for Asia Pacific



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Director, MySDG Centre for Social Inclusion

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Adjunct Professor of Practice at the School of Politics, International Relations and Economics, University of Nottingham Malaysia



TPr. Nurul Syaza Mazelan

Deputy Director, Constituency Coordination Department

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Elite@UM Fellow, Universiti Malaya (UM)



Dr. Thanaraj Murudi

Head of Northern Zone

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Part Time Lecturer at School of Communication, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)



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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