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STEVEN SIM: MALAYSIA OPENS NATIONAL TRAINING WEEK TO ALL ASEAN CITIZENS FOR THE FIRST TIME

KUALA LUMPUR, 27 May 2025 – In a regional first, Malaysia will open its flagship skills development initiative – National Training Week (NTW) – to all ASEAN citizens, offering free access to more than 65,000 courses nationwide and online from 14 to 21 June 2025. The announcement by Malaysia's Human Resources Minister, YB Steven Sim Chee Keong, comes in conjunction with the country's ASEAN Chairmanship.

NTW is the centrepiece of Malaysia's initiatives under the ASEAN Year of Skills (AYOS) 2025 banner and is poised to be the largest and most inclusive training programme in the region to date. Over 65,000 free courses will be offered nationwide and online, covering key growth areas such as artificial intelligence, digital transformation, green technologies, leadership and soft skills. The programme will feature contributions from leading global platforms and institutions including Microsoft, Udemy, Awantec, Alibaba Cloud and top Malaysian training providers.

NTW is primarily supported by the Human Resource Development Corporation (HRD Corp), an agency under the Ministry of Human Resources of Malaysia (KESUMA). It is an integrated centralised platform to search and apply for skills development programmes offered by the Malaysian Government.

Speaking at the ASEAN Human Capital Development Investment Symposium (AHCDIS) in Kuala Lumpur today, YB Steven Sim emphasised the importance of regional cooperation in skills development and reaffirmed Malaysia's readiness to invest in ASEAN's shared future.

“For the first time, we will be extending these high-quality training opportunities beyond our own border to our friends all over ASEAN. This is Malaysia's investment in ASEAN and an investment for human capital development. Our ambition is to make ASEAN the most skilled region in the world through deeper and more meaningful partnerships with our fellow member states,” said YB Steven Sim.

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NTW 2025 is expected to reach at least five (5) million participants from across the region, with an estimated training value of over USD600 million (approximately RM2.5 billion). This ambitious outreach reflects Malaysia's belief that skills development is not only a national priority, but a regional imperative.

The NTW initiative also positions Malaysia as a regional leader in learning and development, setting what is widely seen as a trendsetting benchmark for ASEAN. It complements other flagship platforms under AYOS including the upcoming ASEAN Training Market Conference in July, the ASEAN TVET Conference in August, the Global Skills Forum which will run concurrently with the ASEAN Forum of Manpower Ministers for Human Capital Development in October.

Malaysia welcomes all ASEAN citizens to participate in this unprecedented opportunity to upgrade their skills, expand their horizons and help build a future-ready ASEAN workforce.

Meanwhile, YB Steven Sim also emphasised that ASEAN's long-term success depends on its ability to move beyond traditional economic models and embrace the digital, green and high-value industries of the future.

"It is no longer enough for ASEAN to be the shop floor of the world. We must now become its innovation engine - powered by skilled talent, resilient partnerships and shared purpose," he said.

The AYOS initiative has received strong endorsement from regional leadership. Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, commended Malaysia's leadership in advancing regional upskilling efforts:

"I extend my sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Human Resources and the HRD Corp for their visionary leadership in launching the ASEAN Year of Skills 2025 as a flagship initiative under Malaysia's ASEAN chairmanship. This symposium provides a timely and meaningful platform to reaffirm our collective commitment to investing in our people, the true architects of ASEAN's growth and the foundation of ASEAN's resilience and progress," said Dr. Kao.

In support of this, **Ms. Xiaoyan Qian, Director of the Decent Work Technical Support Team for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific, and Country Director for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao PDR of International Labour Organization (ILO)**, mentioned during her speech at AHCDIS:

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“Skills development cannot exist in isolation. To truly empower workers and support inclusive economic growth, investments in workforce skills must be integrated within broader employment and economic development frameworks. Such policy coherence is fundamental to preparing ASEAN's workforce for the rapidly evolving world of work.”

AHCDIS, the two-day symposium, hosted by KESUMA through HRD Corp, carried the theme '*Investment in Human Capital, Sustainable Financing, Public-Private Partnerships and Social Inclusion*' and kicked off with over 300 participants from across ASEAN.

Chairman of HRD Corp, Datuk Abu Huraira Abu Yazid reaffirmed the importance of AHCDIS for the region during his speech:

“This symposium is a regional action platform where policymakers, employers' organisations, worker representatives, development partners and education institutions come together to identify actionable solutions, share best practices and build momentum for long-term investments in human capital.”

The outcomes of this symposium will serve as a crucial platform for collaboration and knowledge sharing and are expected to contribute significantly to shaping future policies and investments in the region's human capital development, ultimately driving sustainable economic growth and social progress within the ASEAN region.

Distinguished attendees included the Deputy Secretary General (Policy and International), KESUMA, Dr. Mohd Shaharin Umar; Deputy Secretary General (Operation), KESUMA, Sutekno Ahmad Belon; HRD Corp's Chief Strategy Officer and Organising Chairman of AYOS 2025, Dr. Rony Ambrose Gobilee; AYOS 2025 Advisor, Datuk Wira Shahul Dawood; and Assistant Director and Head of the Labour and Civil Service Division at the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC), Ms. Mega Irena.

Find out more about **AYOS 2025, AHCDIS** and all other flagship platforms through its official portal at <https://aseanyearofskills.org/> and access full details on **NTW** at <https://www.nationaltrainingweek.gov.my/>

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Human Resource Development Corporation (HRD Corp), formerly known as the Human Resources Development Council (MPSM), was established in 1993. It was later incorporated as Pembangunan Sumber Manusia Berhad (PSMB) through the enactment of the Pembangunan Sumber Manusia Berhad Act 2001.

As an agency under the Ministry of Human Resources (KESUMA), HRD Corp is responsible for collecting levies from key industries and disbursing training grants through its internal mechanism which is the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF) or Kumpulan Wang Pembangunan Sumber Manusia (KWPSM).

The rebranding of HRD Corp in 2021 reflects the organisation's renewed responsibilities, direction and mission. This includes expanding upskilling and reskilling efforts by employers to help employees achieve more sustainable productivity.

This transformation not only benefits all Malaysians but also empowers underserved communities through more inclusive income-generating opportunities.

It is aligned with HRD Corp's long-term ambition to drive the nation's aspiration of developing a highly skilled workforce.

For more information, visit the HRD Corp website at www.hrdcorp.gov.my