



## **ASEAN MEMBER STATES REAFFIRM ON JOINT STATEMENT TO STRENGTHEN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR A FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE**

**KUALA LUMPUR, 23 October 2025** – ASEAN Member States reaffirmed their collective commitment to advance skills development and workforce transformation across the region with the adoption of the Joint Statement on Skills Development for the Future Workforce in ASEAN, at Shangri-La Kuala Lumpur, yesterday.

Deliberated during the **ASEAN Forum of Manpower Ministers on Human Capital Development (AFMM-HCD)** which was held on 22 October 2025 under the ASEAN Year of Skills (AYOS) 2025, the Joint Statement marks a significant step forward in ASEAN's shared vision to build an adaptable, inclusive and future-ready workforce to drive regional resilience and sustainable growth.

This landmark declaration, endorsed by the ASEAN Manpower Ministers, was presented by The Honourable Mr. Steven Sim Chee Keong, Minister of Human Resources Malaysia to His Excellency Mr. Gilbert F. Houngbo, Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO). It was witnessed by **The Honourable Dato' Seri Dr. Ahmad Zahid bin Hamidi, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia and Minister of Rural and Regional Development**, in the presence of the ASEAN Manpower Ministers, during the opening ceremony of Global Skills Forum (GSF) 2025.

The Joint Statement reflects a bold and united vision of ASEAN, to catalyse workforce transformation by cultivating an inclusive, skilled and adaptable workforce that meets the evolving demands of the global economy.

In his opinion speech, The Honourable Mr. Steven Sim Chee Keong, Minister of Human Resources Malaysia highlighted the aspiration to make ASEAN as the hub for global talent, with each country come together with their core competencies, strength and talent.

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“We have our national priorities, interests and directions. However, there should be more skills training and sharing of best practices, which will lead to skills standards, skills certification recognition and finally to skills transferability across the region,” said Steven Sim.

He further highlighted that ASEAN's skills agenda can be summarised into three (3) core values which are accessibility, adaptability and sustainability.

“The skills training must be accessible to everyone, adaptable to the real world, especially to the future of works which is the Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digitalisation. It also must be sustained in terms of resources and financing,” added Steven Sim.

This vision will be realised through stronger regional collaboration, exchange of good practices, complementary labour market intelligence and skills needs anticipation where appropriate, as well as the acceleration of digital and lifelong learning initiatives.

It also demonstrates ASEAN's determination to empower its people with future-ready competencies, including digital, green and Artificial Intelligence (AI) skills, to ensure that the region's workforce remains competitive and resilient.

Meanwhile, Dr. Syed Alwi bin Mohamed Sultan, Chief Executive of Human Resource Development Corporation (HRD Corp), in his speech said that the idea of the AYOS 2025 began with a shared conviction which is to equip every ASEAN citizen with the right skills, values and opportunities to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

“Each flagship platform under AYOS 2025 marks a chapter in our journey from vision to coordinated action with mobilising talent, advancing inclusivity and equipping our region for the future, which brings us to this Forum.”

“The AFMM-HCD serves to reaffirm Malaysia's shared vision for an inclusive and future-ready skills ecosystem and to translate that vision into concrete, country-driven actions,” added Dr. Syed Alwi.

Malaysia, through the Ministry of Human Resources Malaysia (KESUMA) and its agency, HRD Corp has played a pivotal role in championing human capital development as a regional priority through the successful organisation of AYOS 2025, held in conjunction with Malaysia's ASEAN Chairmanship. It has united governments, industries and learning institutions to drive impactful action in building a future-ready ASEAN workforce.

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The adoption of the Joint Statement serves as a testament to ASEAN's collective vision of building a region that is skilled, resilient and future-ready that continues to learn, grow and thrive together in the face of global transformation.

AYOS 2025, spearheaded by **KESUMA through HRD Corp**, with strong support from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and ASEAN Secretariat, stands as a powerful testament to Malaysia's leadership and ASEAN's collective success in advancing skills development, driving innovation and promoting inclusive growth in the region.

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**About HRD Corp**

Human Resource Development Corporation (HRD Corp) is Malaysia's leading government agency for human capital development under the Ministry of Human Resources (KESUMA).

Governed by the Pembangunan Sumber Manusia Berhad (PSMB) Act 2001, HRD Corp is responsible for the collection and administration of the human resources development levy through the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF), to promote the training, retraining and skills upgrading of employees, apprentices and trainees, aligning their capabilities with employers' business needs and the nation's aspiration of developing a highly-skilled workforce. This ensures Malaysia's workforce remains competitive and adaptable to the demands of both current and future economies.

HRD Corp also plays a pivotal role in strengthening Malaysia's training market, championing innovation, quality and inclusive access to skills development nationwide.

For more information, visit the HRD Corp website at [www.hrdcorp.gov.my](http://www.hrdcorp.gov.my)

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