



JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT MALAYSIA'S COMMITMENT TO THE RIGHT TO HEALTH

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As we observe World Health Day this year, it is paramount for us to reflect on an essential principle central to human well-being – the right to health. In Malaysia, like many parts of the world, access to quality healthcare has become more crucial than ever. While Malaysia has made significant strides in this regard, there are still disparities and barriers that need addressing to fully realise the right to health for all.

The theme for this year's World Health Day, "My health, my right" emphasises the importance of ensuring that every individual, regardless of their background or circumstances, has the right to access health services, education, safe drinking water, clean air, adequate nutrition, safe housing, proper working and environmental conditions, and freedom from discrimination. The theme captures the comprehensive nature of the right to health and underlines its importance in fostering human dignity and well-being.



Health is more than just the absence of illness; it encompasses physical, mental, and social well-being. The right to health is not merely a privilege; it represents a fundamental human right that demands universal acknowledgement and fulfilment. Yet for many people, this remains a distant dream perpetuated by inequality and inadequate access to healthcare. Achieving it requires a comprehensive approach that addresses underlying determinants of health such as poverty, inequality, inadequate sanitation, limited access to education, as well as social and environmental factors.

Despite medical advancements, health outcome disparities persist in Malaysia, exacerbated more recently by the COVID-19 pandemic. Prioritising the right to health requires collective efforts to address inequalities and enhanced preparedness for future emergencies. As we navigate the decelerating post-pandemic recovery and implement the reforms proposed in the Health White Paper, it is our priority to advance universal healthcare and thereby health equity through putting the right to health at the centre of our efforts.

The right to health includes four essential, interrelated elements: availability, accessibility, acceptability, and quality. While Malaysia has made significant progress in ensuring universal healthcare across each of these four elements, some progress remains to be achieved in ensuring equitable access.



An example of how Malaysia addresses disparities in healthcare access is through its infrastructure development, especially in remote areas. The government has implemented various initiatives to improve healthcare accessibility, including building new healthcare facilities in underserved regions. Additionally, Malaysia has invested in telemedicine and mobile health clinics to reach populations in remote areas where traditional healthcare services are limited. These efforts have significantly improved healthcare access and quality for rural communities, reducing the disparities between urban and rural areas. However, much remains to be done on the path to fully realising the target of universal healthcare.

Malaysia has also implemented comprehensive health education programmes aimed at promoting preventive healthcare practices and raising awareness about the importance of seeking timely medical care. By empowering individuals with knowledge and skills to manage their health proactively, Malaysia is not only addressing existing health disparities but also laying the foundation for a healthier future generation.

Achieving the right to health requires collaborative efforts. The MADANI Government is committed to partnering with various stakeholders including policymakers, healthcare providers, civil society organisations, and the private sector. Recognising universal health coverage (UHC) in ensuring equitable access to healthcare, Malaysia has been actively working to expand UHC coverage and improve the quality of healthcare services.



Investing in promoting UHC and strengthening healthcare systems are necessary towards leaving no one behind. Establishing a robust and inclusive healthcare system will not only guarantee equitable healthcare access but also enable individuals to make informed decisions about their health, fostering a culture of proactive healthcare management.

As we celebrate the World Health Day, we must reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the right to health for all regardless of their socioeconomic status, geographical location, or any other barriers they may face. It is imperative for every individual in Malaysia to have access to whatever health services and resources necessary for a healthy life. Let us unite to champion the right to health and pave the way for a brighter and healthier future not only for our country, but also other nations for generations to come.