



SPEECH TEXT

**YB DATO' SRI HAJAH NANCY BINTI HAJI SHUKRI
MINISTER OF WOMEN, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY AND UNICEF MALAYSIA'S
70-YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

**20 NOVEMBER 2024 (WEDNESDAY) | 10:00 am – 1.00pm
KEN TTDI KUALA LUMPUR**

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

Salam Sejahtera, Salam Malaysia MADANI and a very good morning to everyone.

(SALUTATIONS TO BE PROVIDED)

1. I am honoured to stand before you today to celebrate a truly momentous occasion—World Children’s Day and the 70th anniversary of the partnership between UNICEF and the people of Malaysia. This partnership, graced by the vision of our first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, has endured now for seven decades, transforming the lives of children across our nation.

2. Today, we are not only reflecting on our achievements but also reaffirming our commitment to a brighter future. Our dedication to the Convention on the Rights of the Child is more critical than ever as we navigate a rapidly changing world. This year's theme, *'Reimagine the Future,'* challenges us to recognize the invaluable perspectives of our children. Their voices, ideas, and aspirations must guide us as we face the challenges of tomorrow, for they are the ones who will shape the future. By embracing this, we are building a stronger, more prosperous nation.

3. In Malaysia, we are witnessing significant changes in our society, driven by a young and dynamic population. Climate and environmental challenges directly affect our children. Rising temperatures, extreme weather, floods, landslides, and pollution are not just environmental issues—they are threats to the health and safety of our youngest citizens. Protecting the natural world is not just about preserving our land and resources—it is about safeguarding the future for everyone.

4. The rise of technology has created new opportunities for our children. Digital platforms enable them to learn, connect, and develop skills that will prepare them for the jobs of the future. However, these advances also come with its risks. Online threats such as cyberbullying, misinformation, and sexual exploitation and abuse are growing concerns that require urgent attention.

5. We must work together to create a safe digital environment where children can explore, create, and learn without fear of harm. Achieving this requires collaboration among families, educators, and digital platforms to equip children with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate the online world confidently and securely.

6. Safeguarding our children's well-being in their learning environments is equally important. Our children deserve a friendly learning ecosystem that encourages them to engage, explore, and grow without prejudice. Students, educators, families, and society at large share the responsibility of using technology to enhance their learning environment ethically.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. At the heart of this effort is the belief that children are not merely recipients of our policies—they are key partners in shaping the future. Listening to their perspectives, dreams, and concerns is essential for us to make informed decisions that genuinely reflect their needs. Today, we are here to listen to the children and young people among us. Their voices must guide us as we work to fulfill the promises of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

8. Building on this commitment to listening and empowering children, our efforts are further strengthened through impactful initiatives like **the Child Safety Advocacy Program "KASIH Kanak-Kanak."** This program, led by the **Social Welfare Department (JKM)**, has been a cornerstone of our child protection efforts. Through school outreach programs, JKM has educated children on their rights, safe and unsafe touch, and what to do in unsafe situations.

9. This year, the program has reached 326 schools and over 170,000 (173,279) participants nationwide, surpassing its target of 300 schools. States such as Kedah, Melaka, and Terengganu have exceeded their targets, reflecting a strong commitment to child safety across the country.

10. Similarly, **LPPKN**, an agency under our Ministry, has been actively promoting adolescent wellness through initiatives such as the **Sexual Reproductive Health Advocacy Programs**, social counselling sessions, and **KafeTeen** centers across the country. These centers staffed by in-house professionals, provide young people with a safe space to express themselves. From January to September this year, these programs have supported over 260,000 young adults, offering them vital resources and guidance to navigate their challenges.

11. Promoting gender equality is not just about uplifting women; it's about ensuring that all children—boys and girls—grow up in an environment free from discrimination and full of opportunities. It is about setting an example for our youth, showing them that everyone, regardless of gender, can contribute to building a better Malaysia. Empowering girls today is an investment in a brighter, more equitable future.

12. As we move forward, let us renew our commitment to the values of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. For seven decades, UNICEF Malaysia has been a steadfast partner in this mission, and we are grateful for the tireless work they have done to improve the lives of children across our nation. Together, we will continue striving for a Malaysia where every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

13. As a final note, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the UNICEF Malaysia family for your unwavering dedication, partnership, and commitment to our nation's children. Let us continue to work together, ensuring that the future we reimagine today becomes the reality of tomorrow—one where every Malaysian child can look forward to a brighter future.

Thank you.

Wabillahi Taufiq Wal Hidayah, Wassalamualaikum
Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

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Minister of Women, Family and Community Development
20 November 2024