

Check against delivery



**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF
MALAYSIA**

**100TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON
THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC)**

**22ND JANUARY 2026 (THURSDAY)
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

15 Minutes

Thank you, Honourable Chair,

Distinguished members of the CRC Committee,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good afternoon to all.

INTRODUCTION:

1. I am Nancy Shukri, and I am here today as the Head of Delegation for Malaysia. Honourable Chair and respected Committee members, in my 3 years leading social development issues, it has taught me a lot about empathy, especially towards our children who are in need of our protection, guidance and love.

2. We share a collective responsibility to safeguard the care, development, protection, and participation of every child in Malaysia. In this vein, I warmly welcome Dr Farah Nini, Malaysia's Child Commissioner, and our civil society partners. Thank you for your continued commitment to our children.

Honourable Chair,

3. This year marks 31 years since Malaysia acceded to the Convention, a commitment that continues to guide our national efforts to uphold the dignity and rights of every child. The world is facing dynamic changes, uncertainties which include demographic shifts and polarisation. However, Malaysia's position is consistent – to maintain a progressive outlook and collaborative approach. Our Report is a collective outcome of multi-stakeholder cooperation, where I believe everyone in this hall has taken part in our multi-stakeholder discussions and consultations.

GOVERNMENT OVERARCHING DIRECTION

Honourable Chair,

4. The Unity Government under Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim introduced the MADANI Economy Framework in July 2023, envisioned to elevate the quality of life of all Malaysians. Focus areas include increasing job opportunities with meaningful wages, social protection for all, healthcare service reforms, education and human resource reforms, access to basic facilities and affordable housing. We are confident that fulfilling the basic needs of a family would lead to the positive development of every child in a functioning home and community.

5. Since 2022, the Government has allocated a total of **six point seven five billion Malaysian Ringgit** or **one point six billion US Dollar** to key children-related initiatives. From 2022 to 2024, there has been an increase of **one point one nine billion Malaysian Ringgit** or almost **five hundred million US Dollar** put towards such initiatives, representing a **71.2%** rise over the period.

6. This increase in funding has gone towards scaled up school-based nutrition and education support, alongside strengthened preventive child health measures, including immunisation, and continued assistance for vulnerable children and families. We have also incorporated reforms with expansion of **Gender and Social Inclusion Budgeting**, helping ministries better reflect children's needs in planning and reporting cycles.

7. At the same time, the Government is focused on improving public service delivery system and strengthening monitoring mechanisms surrounding children. Towards this objectives, the Prime Minister in 2022 announced the establishment of the **Child Development Agency**, committing more than 94 million Malaysian Ringgit in its first year. As a result, our social worker to children's cases ratio has now been reduced to **one – to – twenty**, ensuring better case management to enable the well-being of children who have fallen through the cracks. We hope that these efforts will enable more coordinated, responsive, and effective delivery of services for children and families across the country.

LEGAL IMPROVEMENTS TO INCREASE THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Honourable Chair,

8. Since our last report, a total of **21 laws** have been repealed, amended or introduced to improve the protection and rights of children. Reforms in recent years include:

- amendments to the **Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017** to address grooming and online exploitation;
- updates to the **Evidence of Child Witness Act 2007** to enhance procedural safeguards for child victims and witnesses; and

- the enactment of the **Online Safety Act 2025**, which impose clear obligations on digital service providers to protect children from online harm.

9. However, we are **most proud** that in 2025, **the Federal Constitution was amended** to grant citizenship to children born abroad to Malaysian mothers, marking a significant advancement in Malaysia's commitment to child rights. Further to this, **birth registration remains available to all children born in Malaysia**, irrespective of parental documentation status under civil registration laws. The Government will continue to closely monitor and strengthen the implementation of this new constitutional right.

10. Complimenting this development is the **mobile registration initiatives deployed to remote and under-served communities** to improve access to legal identity.

This program, initiated in 2018, is continuously improved, and most recently we have implemented intergovernmental collaborations. From November 2024 to June 2025, more than **twelve thousand** students with identification and document issues were successfully resolved with identification assistance from the Ministry of Education. This is an example of positive and concrete steps taken to address rural children's access to essential services such as education and health care.

PROTECTION MEASURES FOR VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Honourable Chair,

11. Malaysia has also taken steps to strengthen its response to violence against children, including through expanded advocacy programs. Since 2023, we have run interagency awareness campaigns in schools as well as the Social Welfare Department's Child Activity Centres to promote our 24-hour National Care helpline which continue to play a critical role in detection, response and psychosocial support. Awareness among children of their rights has increased since then, with **two hundred and twenty three** reports made directly by the children themselves, up from just 36 calls in year 2022. We have also updated our **national framework for handling child sexual abuse cases and expanded integrated support services**, including health, welfare and legal assistance for survivors.

12. In relation to laws pertaining to the rights of non-national children, we would like to share that the Malaysian Parliament passed the Legal Aid and Public Defence Bill 2025 just 4 months ago, which now introduces an inclusive public defence service and extends equal access for all children, including non-citizens. Rest assured, Malaysia will continue to review and improve these rights, within the bounds of its legal and administrative frameworks.

NATIONAL POLICIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF CHILDREN

Honourable Chair,

13. I wish to highlight several key policies introduced in recent years that would give a positive effect on children in Malaysia.

- One, the Government has launched the new **National Policy on Children and its Plan of Action (2025–2030)**. This new framework was drafted in close alignment with the Convention and the 2030 Agenda and will introduce measurable outcomes across key pillars namely protection, development, participation and well-being. The introduction of an integrated, multi-agency data dashboard consist of consolidated data of online

child sexual exploitation and abuse, will significantly strengthen end-to-end child protection pathways.

- Two, the recently launched **National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights 2025 – 2030** ensures that the private sector upholds its responsibility to protect children and prevent child labour, particularly in labour-intensive sectors and supply chains. This is in line with the Government's commitment to protect children in all forms of exploitation.

- Three, as the current **National Strategy Plan in Addressing the Causes of Child Marriage** concluded in 2025, the Government is reviewing its implementation of the next phase, building on lessons learned and emerging trends. Our national statistics indicate that recorded child marriages

declined from 2019 to 2023. As this issue involves state prerogative, religious and customary sensitivities, Malaysia will continue to strategically address child marriage to uphold the rights of every child without discrimination, including safeguarding access to education, protection and well-being support.

- Four, we are improving a current policy regards **family-based care**, especially in response to the needs of children in vulnerable circumstances. Between the year 2019 to 2024, more than **four thousand** children were placed within family environments, reflecting the continued prioritisation of family-based care.

CHILDREN PARTICIPATION

Honourable Chair,

14. To truly believe in children is to provide them the avenues of participation and growth. As such, the National Council for Children and Malaysian Children's Consultative Council, established in 2011, continues to provide formal platforms for children to contribute to national policy discussions. In recent years, there has been increased recognition of youth-led platforms at both national and subnational levels including the state youth assemblies for policy reviews, which include 120 youth members from different states and backgrounds who actively took part in our consultations for the **National Policy on Children and its Plan of Action (2025–2030)**.

15. In this context, we also believe that the views of children should be taken into account in Parliamentary deliberations. Through the Parliament Special Select Committee on Women, Children and Community Development, we have undertaken focused inquiries and tabled a series of thematic reports addressing key child-related issues. This work is further strengthened by cross-party collaboration under the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia on Children's Rights.

On **8th October 2025**, the Government in collaboration with UNICEF Malaysia, convened a Parliamentary Briefing on the CRC. This engagement reinforced parliamentary awareness of children's rights and underscored Parliament's role in shaping legislation, policy oversight and budgetary priorities that affect children.

16. We recognise the growing convergence between climate change and children's rights and ensure that **child-sensitive climate adaptation is being integrated into environmental policies and disaster risk reduction.**

EDUCATION

Honourable Chair,

17. Malaysia has always placed the highest importance on **education**. In this regard, we are pleased to share that as of October 2025, the **Education Act 1996** now mandates secondary education. This amendment is to ensure all children have access to education and places a clear responsibility on parents and guardians for the continued attendance of children in schools.

In fact, the Prime Minister this week launched the **National Education Plan 2026–2035**, integrating school and higher education reforms under a unified framework to ensure inclusive, future-ready human capital development from school to higher education.

HEALTH

18. Besides universal health care coverage, Malaysia continues to maintain high records of immunisation and improved early childhood nutrition. We are now **scaling up mental health support for children and adolescents** through school-based screening, community outreach and youth-friendly health services, recognising that well-being must address both physical and emotional development.

SPECIAL PROTECTION MEASURES

19. Malaysia recognises that deprivation of liberty for children should be approached with caution and applied only where necessary. Our Courts for Children apply a rehabilitative approach, supported by legal aid and social work systems. Procedural safeguards for children in conflict with the law have been enhanced through legislative reform and judicial training. All efforts undertaken are with the best interest of the child in mind.

20. Malaysia further reaffirms its commitment to the principles of the Convention, in particular the principle that the detention of any child shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period. In advancing more **child-sensitive immigration management**, the Government is currently prioritizing the Baitul Mahabbah initiative, providing for a child-

friendly environment, as an immediate and interim measure to remove children from standard immigration depots. This initiative represents an important initial step, enabling the stabilization and protection of vulnerable children while Malaysia prepares for a gradual transition towards a comprehensive Alternative to Detention framework.

Honourable Chair, Distinguished Members,

21. We have achieved significant progress, yet we remain deeply aware of the work that lies ahead. The **issue of legal harmonisation remains an issue that needs to be worked through**. We are mindful of our obligations under the Convention and continue to engage in dialogue with all stakeholders to address these challenges constructively.

22. Malaysia understands that full realisation of children's rights depends not only on laws and policies, but on **effective implementation, coordinated institutions, sufficient resources and the collective commitment of society**. In recent years, we have **expanded collaboration with UNICEF and other UN agencies, civil society, National Human Rights Institution** and increased reliance on data and research to strengthen accountability, understanding and service delivery.

CLOSING

Honourable Chair, Distinguished Members of the Committee,

23. As we mark 31 years since our journey with the Convention began, **we are reminded of the responsibility entrusted to us, to protect every child, uphold their dignity and ensure that their rights are not only recognised, but realised.** The Malaysian delegation is ready to listen attentively and provide answers with utmost sincerity on any matters of concern you may have during this important constructive dialogue. We look forward to fruitful discussions today and tomorrow.

Thank you.