

Closing Message YBTM for 9TH ASEAN CHILDREN'S FORUM

5 August 2026 (Wednesday) | 4.00 pm | Dewan Perdana Nur

Ms. Swe Zin Myint [read: sway-zin-myin],

Director of the Department of Social Welfare, Myanmar and
Representative of SOMSWD [read: som-swad] Chair,

Mr. Mohd Daud bin Mohd Arif

Deputy Secretary-General (Policy) of the Ministry of Women, Family and
Community Development, Malaysia

Distinguished Representatives of the Senior Officials Meeting on Social
Welfare and Development (SOMSWD) and the ASEAN Commission on
the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children
(ACWC)

Representatives of the ASEAN Secretariat

Our valued strategic partners from UNICEF, UNFPA, CRC Asia, Asmae
[read: As-ma-ee], World Vision East Asia, and our partner organisations

Distinguished speakers, mentors, child facilitators, ladies and gentlemen

And most importantly, our dear child delegates joining us here in
Putrajaya and virtually from across all ASEAN Member States.

Salam Sejahtera and a very good afternoon.

It is my great pleasure to be with all of you this afternoon as we bring the
9th ASEAN Children's Forum to a close.

Over the past two days, we have witnessed something truly remarkable. Beyond the meaningful discussions, we have seen the courage, creativity, compassion and leadership demonstrated by each of our child delegates.

This Forum has reminded us that children are not merely the future of ASEAN—they are valuable partners in shaping the ASEAN of today.

Dear Children,

Throughout this Forum, you have shared your experiences with honesty, listened to one another with respect, exchanged ideas across cultures, and worked together to address one of the most pressing issues facing our region—ending violence against children.

You explored how violence can occur in homes, schools, communities and the digital space. More importantly, you did not stop at identifying the challenges. You came forward with thoughtful, practical and innovative recommendations that reflect your commitment to building a safer and more caring ASEAN for every child.

What impressed me most was not only your ideas, but also the empathy, confidence and maturity that each of you displayed throughout the discussions. You have shown us that when children are given the opportunity to participate meaningfully, they are more than capable of contributing to solutions that matter.

This is exactly what meaningful child participation looks like—not children being spoken for, but children speaking for themselves, with adults listening and working alongside them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Earlier this afternoon, during the Intergenerational Dialogue, our child delegates presented a set of recommendations that they had developed collectively throughout this Forum.

These recommendations are far more than a list of proposals. They represent the voices, lived experiences, hopes and aspirations of children from across ASEAN. They remind us that the people most affected by our decisions should also have the opportunity to help shape them.

I therefore encourage policymakers, government agencies, ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and all our partners to carefully consider these recommendations and, where appropriate, translate them into meaningful policies, programmes and initiatives at both the national and regional levels.

Listening to children is the first step. Acting on what they tell us is what truly demonstrates our commitment. Only then can meaningful child participation become a reality rather than simply an aspiration.

Dear Children, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The success of this Forum is the result of the dedication, commitment and close collaboration of many individuals and organisations.

On behalf of the Government of Malaysia, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the ASEAN Secretariat for its steadfast support

and excellent coordination throughout the planning and implementation of this Forum.

My heartfelt thanks also go to CRC Asia, Asmae, World Vision East Asia, UNICEF, UNFPA and SUHAKAM Malaysia for your invaluable expertise, technical guidance and unwavering commitment to advancing child participation and strengthening child protection across ASEAN.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to all SOMSWD Focal Points, ACWC Representatives, facilitators, speakers, mentors, interpreters, organisers, volunteers and everyone working tirelessly behind the scenes. Your dedication has made this Forum possible and continues to strengthen ASEAN's collective efforts towards building a safer, more inclusive and child-friendly region.

To our dear child delegates—and of course, our wonderful child facilitators—thank you.

Thank you for speaking with courage.

Thank you for listening with open hearts.

Thank you for inspiring us with your ideas, your creativity and your determination to make ASEAN a better place for every child.

Although many of us connected virtually, the distance never diminished your enthusiasm, your energy or your passion. You proved that meaningful participation is not limited by geography, but driven by commitment and shared purpose.

I hope you leave this Forum with more than just wonderful memories and new friendships. I hope you return home with renewed confidence,

knowing that your voice matters, your ideas have value, and that each of you has the power to become a champion for children within your own communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While the Forum concludes today, our work certainly does not.

In fact, this is where the real work begins. The conversations we have had over the past two days must now be translated into action. Together, we share the responsibility of ensuring that the recommendations put forward by our children do not remain on paper, but become meaningful changes that improve the lives of children across our region.

As Malaysia concludes its ASEAN Chairmanship, I hope this Forum will leave a lasting legacy. Let it remind us that a stronger ASEAN is one that listens to its children, values their perspectives and empowers them to be part of the decisions that shape their future.

Together, let us continue building an ASEAN where every child is safe, respected, protected and empowered to realise their fullest potential.

With that, I wish all of you a safe journey home. May the friendships forged, the ideas exchanged and the recommendations developed during this Forum continue to inspire meaningful action for children throughout ASEAN.

Thank you. Terima kasih.