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PEOPLE-CENTRED APPROACH

## 'LET ALL FEEL THE WEALTH'

Apec aiming for agenda to be translated into work plans

B. SURESH RAM  
KUALA LUMPUR  
news@nst.com.my

**T**HE Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) wants to see its shared prosperity agenda translated into work plans for its members this year.

Apec senior officials chairman Hairil Yahri Yaacob hoped that the agenda would include all segments of society.

"We want to see the benefits from the shared prosperity agenda translated into work plans for Apec 2020 and for them to touch all segments of society."



APEC 2020  
MALAYSIA

He described the agenda as one of the desired outcomes for the initiatives of the forum.

"We want people from all walks of life to feel what Apec has done for them," he told the Apec Secretariat amid preparations for the first senior officials' meeting.

Malaysia is hosting the regional economic forum and its associated meetings in Putrajaya near here.

What senior officials agree to in the next three days would set the

tone for the rest of the year, a year when the economic forum would be deciding on what to focus on this new decade.

"The Bogor Goals will expire this year," Hairil said, referring to the long-term objective of free and open trade that Apec member economies set for themselves in 1994.

"We need to come up with a new vision to chart our direction for the next 10 to 20 years. Malaysia will provide the leadership to come up with a new vision post-2020 for Apec," he said.

The theme — "Optimising human potential towards a future of shared prosperity" — reflects the forum's recent emphasis on taking a people-centred approach to planning programmes and initiatives.

This has resulted in studies, workshops and activities geared towards promoting inclusivity, equal opportunity, digital educa-

tion, assistance for small businesses as well as environmental awareness.

Hairil, however, emphasised Apec's mission of promoting open trade.

"It remains a top agenda. In fact, it is the foundation. We live in an era when issues such as digital economy, technology, sustainability and inclusivity are very important because these matter to people."

He said the growth generated through trade must translate to gains felt by the population.

"We can no longer see trade and investment just from one angle."

Multilateral gatherings between officials of different government portfolios have been ongoing since Feb 3.

Most notably, the Apec Health Working Group met just days after the outbreak of the new coronavirus. It was an opportunity for officials to coordinate with key infectious disease experts and



Hairil Yahri Yaacob

with representatives from the World Health Organisation.

The two-day Senior Officials Meeting (SOM1) will begin today.

Malaysia is expected to host about 16,000 delegates throughout Apec 2020, which runs until the year-end.

This is the second time Malaysia has hosted the forum in 22 years.

The final event in November involves 21 leaders of its members, which will be a platform to deliver a consensus on critical issues and launch the new Post-2020 Vision of Apec.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad will hold the distinction of being the first world leader who has hosted Apec twice.