



PRESS RELEASE

UNIVERSITI MALAYA AND PERKESO INK STRATEGIC PACT TO ADDRESS GAPS IN MALAYSIA'S SOCIAL SECURITY ECOSYSTEM THROUGH NICHE PROGRAMMES

KUALA LUMPUR, 11 MARCH 2021 – Universiti Malaya and the Pertubuhan Keselamatan Sosial (PERKESO) signed a 5-year strategic partnership agreement today, setting a plan of action for the university's Social Wellbeing Research Centre (SWRC), an Employees Provident Fund (EPF) endowed centre, to support PERKESO's capacity building objectives and contribute positively to the development of Malaysia's social security ecosystem through niche programmes.

The formal signing was sealed by Professor Dato' Ir. Dr. Mohd Hamdi Abd Shukor, Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Malaya and Dato' Sri Dr. Mohammed Azman Dato' Aziz Mohammed on behalf of PERKESO.

Professor Dato' Ir. Dr. Mohd Hamdi expressed his gratitude to PERKESO, adding, "With this latest support from PERKESO, SWRC will be able to accelerate the promotion of capacity building, research and advocacy in addition to continue provide evidence-based policy inputs for the Social Protection Council (MySPC).

He added, "Opportunity drives collaboration, and collaboration inspires growth. The capacity building for PERKESO staff includes short and long-term training courses as well as professional certification, research and community engagements on issues directly related to PERKESO's interests and social protection in general.

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The Strategic Partnership Agreement between UM and PERKESO is an extension of an MOU signed in 2015, which includes managing intervention and rehabilitation of injured workers registered with PERKESO under the disability management programme known as the Return-to-Work (RTW) Programme. SWRC has also been appointed as a Certification Agency to manage on behalf of PERKESO the Certified Disability Management Professional (CDMP) and Certified Return-to-Work Coordinator (CRTWC), professional certifications of the International Disability Management Standards Council (IDMSC), the only test or certification agency in Southeast Asia.

With the agreement, UM and PERKESO hope to extend the various courses to other countries in the region.

Meanwhile, Dato' Sri Dr. Mohammed Azman Dato' Aziz sees the strategic collaboration with UM's SWRC as very timely especially when the COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to health, socioeconomic and humanitarian crises of unprecedented scale and impact. "In times of crisis, efficient administration of social security is key in managing rising unemployment and sustaining livelihoods of people in need of assistance," he said.

He stated that great strides in social protection are only possible with close collaboration and synergy between different industry players. Taking this opportunity, Dato' Sri Dr. Mohammed Azman also highlighted that "While aiming for macro goals, let us not forget that the most important goal of social protection lies at the granular level, which is to ensure that no one is left behind."

Commenting further on the partnership, Professor Dr. Noorsaadah Abdul Rahman, Universiti Malaya's Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation said, "Harnessing win-win strengths and abilities within UM and PERKESO is one of the most strategic ways for the social protection ecosystem to scale innovation and solve complex challenges".

Reflecting on the crisis facing the world now, she said, "The whole gamut of the Care Economy has never become so important until recently especially with the COVID-19 pandemic that has an enormous impact on people's lives throughout the world. With this

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collaboration, we will be able to deep-dive on niche research areas of labour market interventions, disability management and social care.”

A webinar on “Mitigating COVID-19 Impacts on Employment: The Different Phases and What's Next?” was also held in conjunction with the signing ceremony. Moderated by Emeritus Professor Datuk Norma Mansor, Director of SWRC, the webinar discussed on PERKESO’s employment framework of Retention, Relief, Recovery and Social Protection to combat the effects of COVID-19 to the economy from the implementer, business industry and policy researcher’s perspectives. Panellists for the webinar included Gayathri Vadivel (Employment Services Division, PERKESO), Dr. Azlan Darus (Prevention, Medical and Rehabilitation Division, PERKESO), Datuk Michael Kang Hua Keong (National President, SME Malaysia) and Nelleita Omar (Research Director, The Centre).

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About Universiti Malaya (UM)

Universiti Malaya (UM) is the country’s first university. Following the passing of the University of Malaya Act in 1961 by Parliament, UM was recognised as a public university. UM, as it is known today, was officially made a public university in the Federation of Malaya on 1 January 1962.

UM is supported by two academies, thirteen faculties, three institutes and three academic centres that encompass medicine, science, technology, social sciences and humanities. The university also houses Malaysia’s first and biggest teaching hospital - University of Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC). In addition, the Research Cluster had been formed to drive further breakthroughs in knowledge. The emphasis on research is strengthened by the presence of centres of excellence at several of its learning centres.

UM continues to consolidate and solidify its position in both the national and international arenas. It now stands among the world's top 100 universities and is ranked 59th in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2021. In the QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2020, UM falls within the global band of 141-150. Meanwhile, it has also maintained its 5-star rating in the QS Stars University Rating System. In addition, UM is ranked 32nd in the world, 5th in Asia and 6th in the City Centre Campus Setting of UI GreenMetric World University Rankings 2020 based on green campus sustainability and environmental management efforts.

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About the Pertubuhan Keselamatan Sosial (PERKESO)

Pertubuhan Keselamatan Sosial was established as one of the government departments under the Ministry of Human Resources to provide Social Security coverage to workers under the Employees' Social Security Act 1969 (Act 4) and Employees' Social Security General Rules 1971, Self-Employment Social Security Act 2017 (Act 789) and Employment Insurance System Act 2017 (Act 800). PERKESO's core principles are based on the concept of joint responsibility through pooling of resources, sharing of risk and replacement of income.

Since the start of the pandemic in 2020, PERKESO has been tasked by the Government to implement various initiatives under the PRIHATIN, PENJANA and KITA PRIHATIN stimulus packages, as well as Belanjawan 2021. PERKESO is currently implementing improved assistance for employers and workers under the Malaysian Economic and Rakyat's Protection Assistance Package (PERMAI) through the following initiatives: Wage Subsidy Programme 3.0 (PSU 3.0), SIP Prihatin, SPS Lindung, and the COVID-19 Screening Programme for Foreign Workers.

About the Social Wellbeing Research Centre (SWRC)

The Social Wellbeing Research Centre (SWRC), Faculty of Economics and Administration, University Malaya is a think and do tank in social protection and wellbeing for inclusive development and social cohesion. SWRC, established in 2011 from an endowment by the Employee Provident Fund (EPF), has been generating and disseminating evidence-based knowledge on related issues for the benefit of all. This is facilitated through engagements and collaborations with leading national and international partners.

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