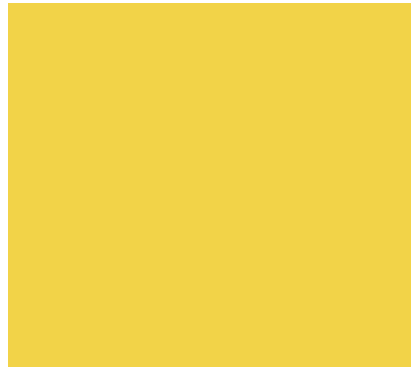


NATIONAL YOUTH ROUNDTABLE 2024

OFFICIAL REPORT

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ABOUT MALAYSIAN YOUTH DIPLOMACY

Malaysian Youth Diplomacy (MyDiplomacy) is a focal point movement in the Malaysian diplomatic scene that aims to **bridge Malaysian youths to diplomatic opportunities** within four main focus areas - **community, career, conversation and consultation**. MyDiplomacy aims to be a platform that empowers youth diplomacy via diplomatic opportunities such as fellowships, scholarships, conferences, and exchange programs with stakeholders encompassing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia, Embassies, Chambers of Commerce, United Nations, multinational corporations and government bodies. To know more about us, kindly refer to our [website](#).

NATIONAL YOUTH ROUNDTABLE 2024

The National Youth Roundtable (NYR) is an initiative addressing the underrepresentation and limited engagement of Malaysian youth in the field of International Relations (IR). Recognising the critical gap in youth discourse within IR, this event serves as a vital platform for young Malaysians from diverse backgrounds to contribute to and shape the future of IR in Malaysia and beyond. The Roundtable's focus is not just on gathering youths but in empowering them to voice their unique perspectives, thereby enriching the national and global dialogue in IR. The previous NYR illuminated critical issues in Malaysia's International Relations education, for in-depth insights, refer to the [*2022 official report*](#).

The 2024 National Youth Roundtable focuses on three domains of discussion:

1. Unveiling Malaysia's International Relations Progress and Challenges

This section assesses the discourse of international relations in Malaysia, exploring the evolution of IR discussions among youths, the contributions of various domestic entities, and how these dialogues have shaped Malaysia's bilateral and multilateral landscape.

2. Advancing Malaysia's Foreign Policy

This part explores key thematic areas in Malaysia's foreign policy. It includes:

- **Thematic 1**: Security and Diplomatic Orientation
- **Thematic 2**: Human Rights & Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- **Thematic 3**: Youth Involvement

3. Malaysia's Chairmanship for ASEAN 2025

- Political-Security Community
- Economic Community
- Socio-Cultural Community

65 youths aged between 15 - 30 years old

13 youth-based and youth-serving organisations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Building upon the outputs gathered during the first National Youth Roundtable (NYR) back in 2022, this year's edition of the NYR focuses on empowering local youths and amplifying their voices in Malaysia's international relations discourse. While the roundtable sessions did see a significant focus on outputs related to the study of international relations itself, more space has been given to explore the involvement and engagement of young Malaysians in Malaysia's foreign policy initiatives and global advocacy efforts in a variety of fields.

With a much more diverse cohort of participants and discussants in NYR 2024, many critical and complex topics were discussed during the roundtable sessions - geopolitics, human rights, sustainability, cultural heritage, climate change, peace and security, trade and digitalisation to name a few. This reflects Malaysian youths' increasing appetite and aptitude for international affairs, as well as their desire to be involved in meaningful causes that create local and global impact. This is aligned with the Malaysian Youth Policy (2015 - 2035) that places emphasis on nurturing Malaysian youths to be responsible citizens at various levels, including at national and international levels.

There seems to be a disparaging gap in the desire of youths to contribute towards international relations (a field of political science) and their actual involvement in politically-inclined activities at the individual level. The Malaysian Youth Index (MYI) reported highly unsatisfactory scores of below 40 for youths involvement in political activities, nationhood and democracy in both 2021 and 2022. Focusing on Malaysia's politics from a foreign policy perspective, this roundtable attempts to provide an avenue for young Malaysians to express their interests, challenges and suggestions - partaking in the democratic process and political activities.

This report highlights the role of Malaysian youth in shaping a resilient and inclusive foreign policy. By addressing key areas where youth can actively contribute to Malaysia's International Relations (IR) and diplomatic strategy, Malaysia can empower young leaders to enhance the nation's global standing and tackle current and future challenges.

THEME
01

**Unveiling
Malaysia's
International
Relations
Progress
and
Challenges**



1.1 CURRENT LANDSCAPE

The state of International Relations (IR) and diplomacy in Malaysia has seen improvements, particularly in youth engagement, representation, and policy implementation. With easier access to information online, more Malaysian youths are interested in global issues and are actively involved in community events, social media campaigns, capacity-building workshops, policy consultations, and international conferences. This has led to increased youth participation in international forums and community service projects. The representation of young Malaysians in decision-making has grown, with a focus on inclusive policies targeting youth. A notable example of this is the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2023 reported the largest Malaysian participation to date as 600 delegates gathered at Expo City Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) to improve climate action globally. Policy recommendations, especially on education and child protection, have been shaped by youth voices, resulting in innovative solutions. Engagement from civil society organizations (CSOs), corporations, and citizens has also increased, helping to address key issues more effectively. Malaysia's progress in human rights was recognized by the UN, with the country named one of the seven model nations for best practices in the 2021 Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

1.2 CHALLENGES

1.2.1 Insufficient Training and Lack of Exposure

Despite progress in youth engagement in IR, Malaysian youths face significant barriers in deepening their involvement. At many youth engagement events, stakeholders often overlook or undervalue young people's perspectives, especially when their proposed strategies differ from traditional solutions. This lack of recognition is partly due to the youths' relatively shorter experience in the field. On top of that, Malaysia's education system introduces IR concepts more robustly at the tertiary level, which limits early exposure and understanding. This situation is further exacerbated when enrollment at tertiary level education scored below 50% in the Malaysian Youth Index in 2021 and 2022. The complexity of IR language and terminology also poses a challenge, as there is insufficient training to help young people navigate difficult vocabulary or the mechanisms of global diplomacy. This lack of early exposure and knowledge can hinder youths' ability to effectively engage with foreign policies or contribute meaningfully to their communities.

1.2.2 Opportunities Imbalance in Regions

One major obstacle is securing funding to attend international conferences and collaborate with global peers. With the ongoing cost of living crisis, many young people struggle to afford the travel expenses required to participate in these events. Furthermore, opportunities in IR tend to be concentrated in urban areas, particularly in major hubs like Klang Valley. Youth from remote or rural regions face logistical, financial, and informational barriers that prevent them from accessing these opportunities. This regional imbalance in access to resources and platforms for engagement limits the full potential of Malaysian youth in IR and reduces overall inclusivity.

1.3 OPPORTUNITIES

1.3.1 Curriculum Reference from Other Countries

One key opportunity lies in drawing inspiration from educational models in other countries with well-designed IR curriculum for bachelor's and master's degrees. By incorporating global best practices and adapting them to Malaysia's context, this will offer a more structured and accessible approach to international diplomacy for young people. International examples could provide insights into how to effectively introduce IR concepts earlier in education, equip students with the skills to understand complex global issues, and foster a more globally-aware youth population.

1.3.2 Exploring Online Events Opportunities

Another emerging opportunity is the increasing availability of online platforms for youth engagement in IR. Virtual events, conferences, webinars, and networking opportunities allow young people from different parts of Malaysia to engage with international peers and experts without the financial and logistical constraints of physical events. The growing number of online opportunities provides greater inclusivity, especially for youths from rural or underrepresented regions. Expanding and promoting these digital opportunities can help democratize access to global IR discussions.

THEME 02

Building Capacity for Sustainable Leadership



2.1 CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Malaysian youths are increasingly engaged in IR and foreign policy, with digital resources enabling access to information. The alignment of foreign policy with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and human rights is key to ensuring long-term resilience and relevance, yet youth involvement in these areas remain limited, indicating untapped potential amongst our young talent pool. This issue needs to be addressed in a timely manner as we approach the third phase of Malaysia's SDG roadmap in 2025.

PHASES OF MALAYSIA'S SDG ROADMAP

Phase 1 (2016-2020)

– Prioritizing SDG according to 11 MP

Phase 2 (2020-2025)

– Focus on post-2020 goals and targets

Phase 3 (2025-2030)

– Pursuing targets in line with Malaysia's capability and capacity

Reflecting on current governmental priorities characterised by the MADANI framework, it is more crucial than ever to empower and engage youths for engaging in sustainable initiatives from the environmental, social and governance sectors, aiding in Malaysia's bid to be a sustainable leader in global arena.

2.2 CHALLENGES

2.2.1 Limited Access to Comprehensive Sustainability Education

Access to information about the SDGs, while significantly more incorporated in the education system today than prior to the 2020s, is generally less emphasised in more marginalised groups of young people, such as those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and youths from rural areas. There is also a disparity or rather mismatch between the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of youths in regards to SDGs in their daily lives. Amongst university students, a negative association between student knowledge and practice was present, suggesting that while tertiary level education provided better exposure towards the knowledge of SDGs and sustainability, there is a lack of supportive or encouraging environment to put knowledge into practice.

2.2.2 Lack of Capacity to Engage in Sustainability Initiatives

Youth require skills in areas like diplomacy, digital engagement, and environmental stewardship to participate effectively in foreign policy and contribute to sustainable development at local and global levels. At present, there is a lack of equitable and holistic opportunities for youths from a variety of backgrounds to attain the relevant skills that would enable them to engage more meaningfully in international and national sustainability initiatives. Youths in the roundtable sessions highlighted the need for more meaningful youth partnership in the country. This reflects the “Empowered Youth, Sustainable Future” 2014–2017 Strategy under United Nations Development Program (UNDP) which places emphasis on the monitoring and accountability, research, and advocacy, as well as the following mechanisms for youth empowerment:

1. Supporting young people by establishing formal spaces for their participation, giving them opportunities to participate in decision-making processes, contribute data, and have an impact on development priorities and funding allocations.
2. Recognising barriers to accelerating goals and targets’ development and defining efficient interventions that support the achievement of results on a number of fronts, such as those supporting increased youth participation and civic engagement or those combating prejudice against young people.
3. Delivering efficient, demand-driven, context-specific, and evidence-based policy advice and technical help using our global programming expertise and depth and breadth of knowledge.

Hence, there is a need to incorporate these mechanisms when interacting with youths in sustainability efforts, especially in relations to achieving sustainability targets in accordance with Malaysia’s foreign policy goals.

2.3 OPPORTUNITIES

2.3.1 Sustainability Education Within and Beyond Classrooms

Across the roundtable discussions, there was a consensus amongst participants that more could be done to incorporate SDGs and sustainability-related topics into the education curriculum in schools and learning institutions. However, there were also suggestions to expand and explore sustainability education beyond the conventional education systems. This includes exploring options such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) to provide more substantial and comprehensive teachings, increasing the accessibility of quality sustainability education by reducing costs, overcoming geographical and time barriers, and providing equal access to materials and resources. To further enhance the delivering of sustainability education, participants emphasised the need to incorporate Malaysia's foreign policy and relevant international components into topics so that youths are able to understand the correlation between these fields.

2.3.2 Increased Capacity Building Programs for Youths

For the youth, with the youth. Participants of the roundtable discussion also urged for the creation of more opportunities to upskill and build their capacity in areas of both sustainability and diplomacy. Through youth-oriented trainings, workshops, and seminars, Malaysian youths hope to develop not just technical knowledge but also practical skills in a variety of fields such as digital diplomacy, sustainable development and human rights. Best practices include the Malaysian Youth SDG Agent Initiative, which was initiated by the youth development arm of the APPGM-SDG Secretariat, that actively involves youths in key aspects of the implementation of SDGs in local communities.

THEME 03

Proactive Engagement in Regional and Global Challenges



3.1 CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Throughout 2024, Malaysia has been increasingly demonstrating its strength on the international stage. This is evident through its strong solidarity with Palestine, and it continues to be one of the most vocal countries in the world. Malaysia joined the BRICS coalition as an official partner country to strengthen its economic and geostrategic position, deepened collaboration with China in celebration of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations, and signed various agreements, such as the Five-Year Programme for Economic and Trade Cooperation between Malaysia and China. Additionally, Malaysia elevated its bilateral relations with South Korea to a Strategic Partnership and is preparing for its ASEAN 2025 Chairmanship while undertaking numerous initiatives in areas such as artificial intelligence, renewable energy, and securing economic opportunities. All these actions, both at home and abroad, highlight Malaysia's commitment to global engagement and its aspiration to strengthen its standing on the global stage. Youth have played a supportive role in advancing Malaysia's foreign policy agenda, as evidenced by the Malaysia Youth Council (MBM) calling on the UN to protect civilian lives and take action against Israel for its attacks.

3.2 CHALLENGES

3.2.1 Navigating Geopolitical Tensions and Global Rivalries

While Malaysia has long maintained a policy of neutrality, the growing U.S.-China rivalry presents a challenge. As the country seeks to deepen its economic ties with China, it must also navigate the security concerns tied to the U.S.-China tensions, particularly in the South China Sea. For Malaysian youths, this geopolitical tension may create a challenging environment in terms of career opportunities in trade, diplomacy, and security. Young people may face uncertainty in how to engage with both superpowers while maintaining Malaysia's long-standing position of neutrality.

3.3 OPPORTUNITIES

3.3.1 Fostering Dialogues and Digital Transformation

The intensifying competition between the U.S. and China in the digital and technological sectors presents an opportunity for Malaysian youth to take the lead in shaping the future of these fields. As Malaysia focuses on digital transformation, there is a growing need to engage youth in digital literacy programs and discussions on critical topics such as AI governance, cybersecurity, and tech diplomacy. This digital revolution offers a chance for young people to become key players in driving Malaysia's technological progress, ensuring the country is well-positioned in the global digital economy. Malaysia's upcoming ASEAN Chairmanship in 2025 provides another avenue for youth to engage in regional dialogues. This focus on youth involvement in digital and technological governance can empower the next generation to take proactive roles in addressing global challenges and advancing Malaysia's standing in an increasingly interconnected world.

CONCLUSION

The National Youth Roundtable (NYR) 2024 explores and discusses the critical need for Malaysia to integrate youth's concerns in its foreign policy agenda, empowering young Malaysians through inclusive representation, sustainable leadership, and proactive engagement in regional and global challenges. We are suggesting three next steps to take into consideration, which include (1) to emphasize the need to equip the youth with a deep understanding of Malaysia's diplomatic history and current international engagements, (2) to leverage multilateral platforms to address youth-centric issues, and (3) to recognize the importance of youth by building their confidence and celebrating their achievements. As we conclude the NYR 2024 with a joint statement and a full report, MyDiplomacy is always committed to fostering ongoing dialogues and exchanges. These efforts are aimed at empowering Malaysian youth to be fully prepared for the ever-evolving global challenges and to advance Malaysia's foreign policy in an effective and impactful manner.

4.1 NEXT STEPS

4.1.1 Equipping Malaysian Youth for Global Diplomacy

We need to equip the youth with a comprehensive understanding of Malaysia's diplomatic history, current international engagements, and the nation's positions on a range of global issues. Specifically, in the era of digital communication, we should empower youth by training them to effectively utilize social media and other online platforms for digital diplomacy. This will not only help in successfully conveying Malaysia's messages and values globally but also foster stronger ties with young people from other nations, enhancing Malaysia's global image.

4.1.2 Utilizing Multilateral Platforms to Address Youth Concerns

We should leverage Malaysia's participation in regional and international multilateral frameworks like the ASEAN, BRICS, World Bank, UN, and more to address challenges that youth are most concerned with such as employment, education, technology, and environmental issues. By doing so, we can ensure that the benefits of this involvement and participation in different multilateral platforms also extend to our younger population, securing youth a more favourable domestic and global environment and more opportunities in trade, innovation, and sustainable development.

4.1.3 Emphasizing the Importance of Youth and Building Confidence

In addition to the outlined strategies, we should realize the importance of publicly recognizing the significance of youth in shaping Malaysia's future and celebrating the achievements of young Malaysians in various fields, and building their confidence to take on leadership roles both nationally and internationally.

National Youth Roundtable 2024

Joint Statement



PREAMBLE

We, the undersigned students actively participating in International Relations (IR) societies, pursuing studies in IR and political science studies, along with informed young individuals and civil society observers assembled at the National Youth Roundtable on 20th January 2024, recognise the importance of constructive engagement involving youth and informed discourse around three priority areas in the fields of international relations and foreign policy of Malaysia i.e. (1) Unveiling Malaysia's IR Progress and Challenges, (2) Advancing Malaysia's Foreign Policy and (3) Malaysia's Chairmanship for ASEAN 2025 towards a fair, inclusive and sustainable development of Malaysia's aspirations and contributions on the international stage.

We call upon the relevant agencies such as but not limited to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations (UN) to consider the recommendations and key insights of youths through meaningful and deliberate efforts including, but not limited to, policy formulation and implementation, shaping the direction of response to international issues and developments, and constructing solutions to domestic and global challenges.

We recognise the importance of shaping a national foreign policy that emphasises the role of Malaysia in promoting peace, security and stability in the region and beyond. We acknowledge the need to engage and collaborate with multiple stakeholders in navigating the rising challenges of both traditional and non-traditional security issues, increased geopolitical tensions among conflicting powers, and emerging threats and conflicts.

We call upon all stakeholders to increase meaningful youth involvement in consultation, decision-making, and implementation of national foreign policy, as well as solutions and efforts to address global challenges. We recognise the need for stakeholders to work with and for youths to increase conversation, foster collaboration and build the capacity of youths in the realm of international relations and foreign affairs within and beyond Malaysia.

We urge Malaysia, as the incoming ASEAN chair in 2025, to lead in promoting a unified ASEAN approach and in reviewing the ASEAN Charter. This initiative should aim to enhance regional cohesion and address contemporary challenges, ensuring ASEAN's effectiveness and unity on the global stage.

DOMAIN 01

UNVEILING MALAYSIA'S IR PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES



We observe the effectiveness of several agencies in Malaysia in representing and advocating for Malaysia's interests in international forums. The observations made are as follows:

1. Efforts of all agencies to **promote the values of peace, humanity, justice and equality** as aligned in Malaysia's foreign policy are commendable, especially as seen in the open and unwavering support for humanitarian causes and upholding human rights and justice in the international arena.
2. **Agencies in Malaysia lack more open and democratic engagement** with the public in shaping the narratives when representing and advocating for Malaysian interests in international forums.
3. Although it is acknowledged that key public-facing activities of relevant agencies are significantly focused on raising awareness and encouraging youth participation in relevant matters, it is noted that **efforts surrounding these areas could be improved.**

¹ The following agencies include ministry and its agencies, multilateral organisation offices and bodies notably UN, ASEAN, youth networks like MyDiplomacy and more.

We strongly urge that the agencies **explore new approaches** that are robust, dynamic and innovative to promote the discourse of IR in Malaysia. Suggested approaches include the following:

1. All agencies are encouraged to focus on promoting and practising **diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)** approaches for public engagement.
2. Agencies should **collaborate to establish comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and learning systems and frameworks** suited to local contexts. These systems should foster trust and cooperation by utilising SDGs as one of the key indicators.
3. Established and credible agencies should **increase support and assistance for youth-focused agencies** to encourage active participation in international fora.
4. Constantly **update the syllabus within high school and tertiary institutions** to continuously share nuances and engage in IR and engage students in how they can proactively participate in youth diplomacy.
5. Malaysia needs to **democratise the conversation around international issues**, treating them as equally important as domestic ones due to their interconnected nature.
6. Agencies are tasked with **developing necessary guidelines and action plans** that clearly promote Malaysia's foreign policy, with segments including soft power, middle powermanship and people-to-people diplomacy.
7. Malaysia should encourage the **development of local and regional expertise in IR theories**, especially within the Southeast Asian region.

DOMAIN 02

ADVANCING MALAYSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY



Thematic 1

Security and Diplomatic Orientation

We urge Malaysia to maintain a **neutral, non-aligned but proactive stance** towards geopolitical competition and great power rivalries in the international system. We strongly recommend Malaysia adopt a moderated approach s to balance the relationships between nations by:

1. **Encouraging East-West and North-South cooperation** through increased dialogues, forums, and joint collaborative efforts, particularly focusing on addressing security issues.
2. **Strengthening its position through a holistic hedging strategy** to play a constructive role in international affairs, Malaysia should enhance its engagement in defense diplomacy to more effectively advocate for mutual security, peace and stability of states amidst great power politics.
3. **Harnessing its soft power capabilities through cultural, diplomatic, and economic** means, thus complementing its strategic initiatives. In doing so, Malaysia asserts its regional autonomy as part of ASEAN, advocating for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and upholding ASEAN's principles in navigating both global and regional challenges.

We strongly encourage Malaysia to play its role and extend its focus beyond the conventional framework of middle power terminology, broadening its perspective to embrace a more expansive and multifaceted role in the global arena, leveraging her unique strengths and strategic position more effectively by:

1. **Proactively engaging in regional and international affairs**, with a focus on **strengthening diplomatic efforts** and utilising its strategic position and relationships to foster dialogue for Asia's regional security.
2. **Actively participating in multilateral platforms**, not merely as a middle power but as a **proactive problem-solver**. This includes taking the lead in or significantly contributing to international efforts tackling global challenges like climate change, public health crises, and peacekeeping.
3. **Explore closer areas of cooperation in traditional and non-traditional security issues**, with an emphasis on emerging areas of concern such as preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE), artificial intelligence (AI) regulation and data governance, as well as environmental security.

Thematic 2

Human Rights and Sustainable Development Goals

We acknowledge the challenges in integrating human rights and humanitarian efforts into Malaysia's foreign policy, including perceived intrusiveness and interference, and the trade-offs with other diplomatic priorities. We advocate for a nuanced approach that emphasises a sustained commitment to humanitarian efforts and proactive stakeholder engagement by:

1. **Building awareness and proactiveness** within the civic community of the positive impact of human rights and humanitarians on fostering greater sustainable development, regional stability and international cooperation through realising diplomatic dialogues and collaborations with nations and international organisations possessing aligning goals.
2. **Committing to a consistent and equitable approach** to human rights issues, such as the treatment of refugees, regardless of the geopolitical context.
3. Strengthening the commission on human rights and humanitarian issues within foreign policy by **allocating more resources and expanding its mandate**, ensuring human rights are a central focus in Malaysia's international engagements.

We strongly advocate for a united and directed approach toward policy, community and ecosystem that champions the integration of SDGs into foreign policy to ensure sustainability in national development plans by:

1. **Aligning national strategies with specific SDGs** to ensure coherence between domestic development policies and international commitments.
2. **Foster multi-stakeholder collaboration between government agencies, private sector entities, civil societies and international organisations** with visions aligning with particular SDGs in question with policy strategies to employ a cooperative approach to enhance the effectiveness of SDG implementation.
3. **Invest in institutional capacities to support SDG initiatives** through promoting research, innovation and partnerships between agencies and educational institutions and encouraging public participation through educational programs, campaigns and partnerships with the media.
4. **Establish mechanisms for data collection and regular reviews**, involving marginalised groups and civil society organisations, to assess Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) progress and the impact of trade agreements and immigration policies on local jobs and society, ensuring adaptability to economic changes.

We recognise the imperative to deliver action-oriented strategies to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and therefore reaffirm Malaysian Youth Diplomacy's submitted written input for the Summit of the Future which can be accessed [here](#).

Thematic 3

Youth Involvement

We demand greater youth inclusion in Malaysia's foreign policy, especially in policy areas of digital diplomacy and technology, youth entrepreneurship and sustainable development that can serve as entry points to harness tech-savvy and forward-looking youth potential to advance Malaysia's international stance on issues highly relevant with the younger generation by:

1. **Revitalising the Youth Advisory Council for Foreign Affairs** to provide a formal platform that allows for two-way engagement between the ministry to disseminate information and the youth to express their recommendations.
2. **Organising consultative dialogues** involving direct stakeholders, civil society organisations, policymakers and public youth participants to provide input on specific foreign policy issues.
3. **Financing the organisations of targeted workshops, seminars and youth ambassador programs**, with a special emphasis on digital diplomacy, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development. The aim is to deepen their understanding of global issues and provide opportunities for direct engagement with foreign policy experts.

We call for civil society organisations, academic institutions and government agencies to encourage the participation of Malaysian youth in international diplomacy platforms in order to build a generation of youth that are civic-minded and socially conscious of global issues that are tied to Malaysia's development through:

1. **Creating diverse programs in partnership** with the above-mentioned entities, specifically designed to cultivate skills in diplomacy, international relations, and negotiation. These programs should extend beyond academic settings, offering practical experiences and pathways for youth to pursue careers in these sectors.
2. **Enhancing and systematising internship programs** with diplomatic missions and think tanks for young professionals to obtain hands-on experience in diplomatic processes.
3. **Promoting Model United Nations (MUN) conferences and diplomatic simulations** at the local level through supporting school organisations and coalitions of MUN clubs in Malaysia with resources and mentorship.
4. **Supporting Malaysian youth representatives** participating in international youth conferences and youth exchange programs through providing financial support and mentorship.
5. **Creating an open, accessible, and inclusive central network** to inform youth about opportunities in training programs, consultations, youth exchanges, and international representation, thus democratising diplomacy for public youth. This network should aim to form a centralised hub connecting IR students across Malaysia, bridging the gap between private and public university students.

DOMAIN 03

MALAYSIA'S CHAIRMANSHIP FOR ASEAN 2025



Thematic 1

Political-Security Community

We recognise the importance of leveraging ASEAN's centrality and pragmatic approach to address regional security challenges in Asia through:

1. Strengthening ASEAN's institutional framework by **reinforcing the role of ASEAN-led mechanisms**, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the East Asia Summit (EAS) to foster consensus and unity among ASEAN member states in facing global challenges.

2. **Emphasising ASEAN's role as a neutral but proactive platform** for dialogue conflict resolutions, utilising early warning mechanisms, diplomacy and adherence to international law as key instruments to adopt a proactive role in conflict prevention.

We call for Malaysia to actively promote a united and collaborative approach for ASEAN nations to address political and security matters by:

1. **Advocating for the expeditious conclusion of a Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea** for fair management of maritime disputes and supporting joint maritime patrols to combat piracy and illegal fishing.

2. **Strengthening regional collaboration on counterterrorism initiatives** through intelligence-sharing, joint training exercises and capacity-building designed to address the root causes of radicalisation and extremism, and to tackle non-traditional security issues which are unique to the ASEAN region.

3. **Developing joint preparedness plans** that enhance the timeliness and effectiveness of ASEAN member states in coordinating responses to transnational or non-traditional security issues such as natural disasters and humanitarian crises.

4. **Achieving consensus within ASEAN** regarding non-proliferation and disarmament initiatives to present a united front towards global nuclear powers.

5. **Addressing the escalating region's concerns of cybercrime** by enhancing cyber threat monitoring and fostering public-private partnerships for stronger cyber defence.

We urge Malaysia to actively engage in diplomatic dialogue with neighbouring countries and contribute to the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts, as well as strengthen regional partnerships within ASEAN and other regional organisations to address common security concerns to maintain peace and stability within the region by:

1. **Reemphasizing shared values and norms** for better cooperation and a sense of unity, revisiting ASEAN foundational principles of non-interference, and elevating relevant values from the Malaysian community such as sustainability, prosperity, innovation, respect, trust, and compassion.
2. **Encourage higher transparency and consistency** in the development of military and defence assets and goals among other ASEAN member states to foster better trust and prevent circumstances of escalation of insecurity.

Thematic 2

Economic Community

We urge Malaysia to focus on enhancing fair regional economic development and inclusive growth within the Southeast Asian region. We recognise the importance of amplifying trade activities among ASEAN member states and beyond, increasing efforts to attract more foreign investments into the region, and prioritising job creation for citizens by emphasising on a people-oriented approach in any and all economic development activities through active participation from the public, especially in decision making processes.

We recognise the need for increased inter- and intra-ASEAN cooperation to ensure relevance, promote forward-thinking and enhance responsiveness towards emerging trends and developments in the global market. We recommend that Malaysia fosters increased cooperation during its ASEAN Chairmanship by:

1. **Upgrading trade agreements and initiatives** among individual ASEAN member states, as well as with ASEAN Dialogue Partners, with an increased focus on sectoral-based cooperation to ensure mutually beneficial arrangements.
2. **Prioritising the continuity, accelerated implementation and of existing regional plans**, including, but not limited to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.
3. **Introducing the possibility of establishing a Regional Economic Corridor for ASEAN** to stimulate economic development in the region via shared expertise and interconnected infrastructure.

We strongly encourage Malaysia as the chair of the ASEAN chairmanship to focus on increasing efforts to facilitate the integration of technology and innovation for accelerated economic development and growth across ASEAN member states by:

1. **Promoting increased digital literacy** among all citizens of ASEAN member states, especially amongst vulnerable and marginalised communities.
2. **Encourage and support technological innovation and advancement** through increased domestic, regional and international investments and infrastructure, supporting innovation hubs and technology parks within the region.
3. **Adoption and increased standardisation of safe, regulated and secured financial technology** in day-to-day economic activities.
4. **Increase funding availability and empower existing regional agencies** to promote more science-based innovation and development.

We recognise the emerging and potential megatrends and global challenges surrounding economic development, and we strongly encourage Malaysia to focus on the following sectors and areas of concern. Malaysia should advocate for a more sustainable economy through the increased integration of green practices in trade and commerce activities, reinforcing the circular economy framework in the region, and progressing the ASEAN Strategy for Carbon Neutrality.

Thematic 3

Socio-Cultural Community

We recognise the imperative to build a robust ASEAN identity through enhancing mutual understanding between ASEAN countries in times of geopolitical uncertainty and regional instability by:

1. **Appointing Youth Cultural Ambassadors from each ASEAN nation state** to form a network to organise events on a regional level with themes including, but not limited to language learning initiatives, digital storytelling, traditional crafts, film screenings and culinary exchanges that specifically showcase the cultural diversity of ASEAN.
2. **Promoting joint research, community service, and collaboration initiatives** between citizens of ASEAN states, encouraging the exchange of best practices and fostering collaborative learning.
3. **Expanding student exchange programs and providing students with funding and resources to participate** in these programs, enhancing their international exposure and learning opportunities.
4. **Launching public awareness campaigns** to highlight shared cultural heritage within ASEAN to encourage public involvement with regional cultural exchange events.
5. **Advocating for the promotion of adventure tourism and the extension of travel visas** within the ASEAN region.

We call for Malaysia to promote a culture of sharing best practices through establishing knowledge exchange platforms showcasing successful policies, models and experiences that have worked for Malaysia with other ASEAN nations, and support regional capacity-building initiatives sharing expertise and methodologies between educators, administrators, healthcare professionals by encouraging the involvement of Malaysian parties to spearhead efforts addressing social challenges like education, public health, and cultural preservation among ASEAN countries. We recognise the importance of regional cooperation in protecting and preserving Indigenous cultural heritage across the region through:

1. **Developing an ASEAN Framework for the Safeguarding Indigenous Cultural Heritage consisting of common guidelines and principles** that allow preservation efforts across the region to be coordinated and measured while allowing individual nations to preserve national authority over specific actions.
2. **Establishing legal frameworks and policies** to protect the rights of indigenous communities in ASEAN.
3. **Creating a joint focus group leveraging technology for the documentation and promotion of Indigenous cultural heritage** through digital archives, exhibits and databases for indigenous cultural artefacts and knowledge.
4. **Including indigenous cultural heritage as a topic in regular regional forums and dialogues** on sustainable development of ASEAN member states to highlight the imperative of cultural preservation for the development of a civilised society.

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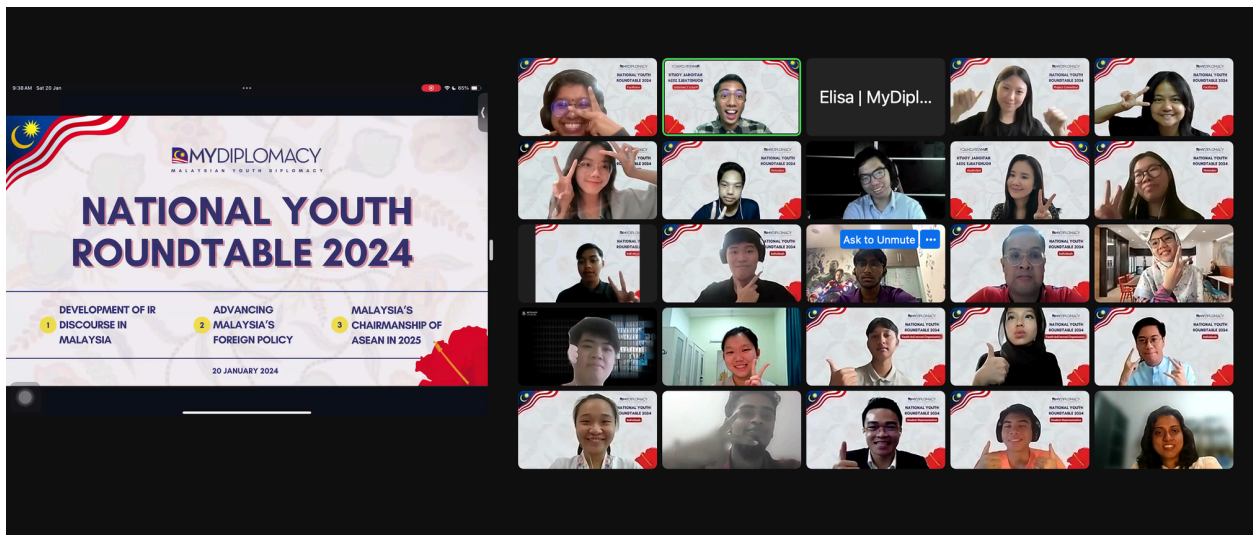
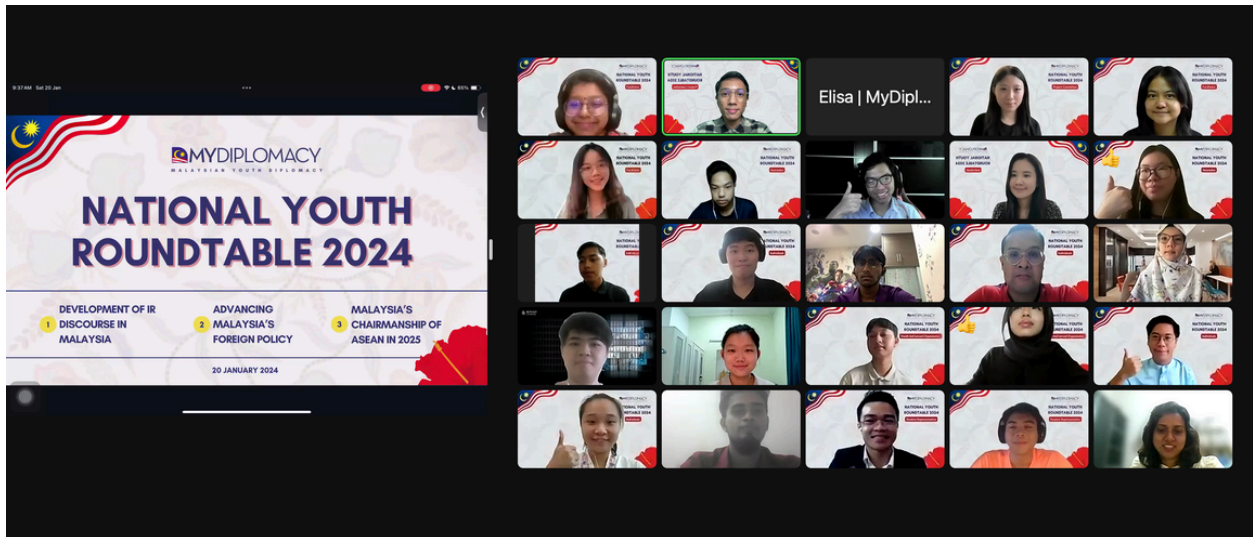
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PICTURES



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A total of 65 youths participated in the 2024 edition of the National Youth Roundtable, representing diverse backgrounds and viewpoints, participating actively in breakout sessions and contributing towards the completion of the National Youth Roundtable 2024 Joint Statement.

Editorial Team

KHU YEN SIN

Director & Chief Editor, National Youth Roundtable 2024
Policy Secretary, MyDiplomacy

KUHANEETHA BAI KALAI CELVAN

Editor & Organising Committee, National Youth Roundtable 2024
Regional Co-Chair, MyDiplomacy

AZMAN 'AZHIM ROSLAN

Editor & Organising Committee, National Youth Roundtable 2024
National Co-Chair, MyDiplomacy



Malaysian Youth Diplomasi (MyDiplomasi)

*Persatuan Pendidikan Diplomasi Dan Isu
Semasa Antarabangsa Malaysia*
(PPM-002-01-23052022)

<https://www.diplomacymy.com/>
contact@diplomacymy.com
[@diplomacymy](#)