MEDIA STATEMENT
THE OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF MALAYSIA (SUHAKAM)

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WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY 2026: EVERY CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD, PROTECTED AND EMPOWERED TO SHAPE THEIR FUTURE

KUALA LUMPUR (20 NOVEMBER 2026) - The Children's Commissioners (CC) of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) join children, families and communities in Malaysia and around the world in commemorating World Children's Day 2026.

This year's theme, **'My Day. My Rights. My Future.'**, reaffirms that children are rights-holders whose voices, experiences and aspirations must be respected. It calls for greater commitment to creating an environment where every child can grow up safely, enjoy their rights and have a meaningful role in shaping their future.

The CC acknowledge several positive developments in Malaysia throughout 2026, including efforts by several states to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18, the coming into force of the Anti-Bullying Act 2026 [Act 876] and the Online Safety Act 2025, the establishment of the Anti-Bullying Tribunal, and the introduction of the Malaysia Student Leaders Council by the Ministry of Education to strengthen children's participation.

The CC also welcome the Ministry of Education's introduction of the Student Protection Policy to strengthen safeguarding in schools. While implementation may present practical challenges, these must not undermine its effectiveness. The true measure of progress lies not in the introduction of laws and policies alone, but in their consistent enforcement and the meaningful protection they provide to every child.

As digital technology becomes increasingly embedded in children's lives, the CC recognise both its benefits and emerging risks. While digital platforms offer opportunities for learning, communication and creativity, they also expose children to cyberbullying, online grooming, sexual exploitation, harassment, harmful content and extremist propaganda.

The CC emphasise that ensuring online safety requires coordinated efforts by the Government, technology companies, parents, caregivers and educators. Technology companies must implement effective safeguards and reporting mechanisms, while parents and caregivers should maintain open communication with children, establish age-appropriate boundaries and equip them with the knowledge to navigate online risks. Such measures must also respect children's rights to privacy, information and expression, taking into account their evolving capacities and best interests.

Despite these developments, the CC remain deeply concerned by incidents of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation involving children reported throughout the year. It is particularly troubling that children continue to experience harm in places where they should feel safest, including homes, schools, care institutions and communities.

The continued reporting of sexual offences against children is especially alarming. Although increased reporting may partly indicate greater public awareness and willingness to speak out, it also highlights the need for stronger prevention, early intervention and accessible reporting mechanisms. Cases that remain unreported are equally concerning, as silence allows abuse to continue undetected.

The CC urge anyone who witnesses or suspects child abuse or exploitation to report it to the relevant authorities without delay. Such reports must be followed by prompt investigations, child-sensitive procedures, appropriate medical and psychosocial support, and accountability for perpetrators. Children who disclose abuse must be treated with dignity and protected from further harm.

Beyond protection, children must also be empowered to participate in decisions affecting their lives. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recognises their right to express views freely on matters concerning them, with due weight given according to their age and maturity. The CC therefore call for stronger mechanisms to ensure that children's perspectives are meaningfully considered in the development of policies, programmes and decisions that affect their well-being.

On this World Children's Day, the CC wish to remind every child**:** Your voice matters. Your rights matter. Your future matters. To parents, caregivers, educators, institutions, the Government and society, the message is equally important**:** listen to children, take their concerns seriously and act in their best interests.

The CC call upon all stakeholders to translate their commitments into concrete and sustained action that delivers meaningful improvements in children's lives. Protecting children's rights is not merely about securing their future, but ensuring that they can live safely, with dignity and equal opportunities today.

Children's rights cannot wait for tomorrow. They must be respected, protected and fulfilled today.

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Children's Commissioners (CC)
Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
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