



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

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**APEC 2020 Background Paper – Theme: Optimising
Human Potential Towards a Future of Shared
Prosperity**

Purpose: Consideration
Submitted by: Malaysia



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A. INTRODUCTION

The theme for APEC 2020 is 'Optimising Human Potential towards a Future of Shared Prosperity'. In a nutshell, APEC 2020 is about resetting APEC's agenda and steering it back to its fundamental objective of achieving sustainable economic growth and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region that is truly inclusive. In the host year, Malaysia will focus on bringing APEC closer to the People by highlighting people-centred issues, with the objective of creating a balanced and fair cooperation among economies towards a more inclusive and sustainable development in the region. The benefits accrued through APEC will be translated into a more comprehensible message for the general public.

The theme is anchored by two main elements, namely (i) economic growth that ensures no one left behind; and (ii) equitable participation and benefit from the economic growth. The theme is inspired from the adage "Prosper Thy Neighbour", introduced by the then Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Mahathir Mohamad in his speech at the 30th meeting of the ASEAN Foreign Minister in 1997. The underlying intention is to promote spirit of friendship and togetherness in ensuring a mutually beneficial trading relationship. In his speech, the Prime Minister emphasised the importance of the Prosper-Thy-Neighbour policy. This is because prosperous neighbours make good trading partners and give each other less problem. Putting this into the APEC's context, each and every APEC member economy must assist each other to become stable and prosperous.

To further strengthen coherency between trade and investment, and a broader peoples' potentials, wellbeing and prosperity agenda – this overarching theme also relates to a newly-announced Malaysia's Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 (SPV 2030) that aims to ensure a sustainable growth with a fair and equitable distribution of income towards a nation's prosperity. Initiatives and programmes undertaken by APEC should be able create opportunities for a wide range of people and not limited to certain segment of society. Through this, every APEC citizens would be able to enjoy the prosperity created in the region.

B. CONCEPTS OF APEC 2020

i. Shared Prosperity

'Shared Prosperity' is the key message that will be embraced in all the priority areas and initiatives carried out in 2020. Malaysia aims to find a balance between the developing and developed economy through fair and genuine cooperation in all the priority areas for a more inclusive development in the region. By adopting 'Shared Prosperity', APEC economies can realign the focus for trade and investment that is more inclusive, as regional cooperation can be fruitful for narrowing inequalities within and among countries.

Regional economic cooperation and integration can help the lesser developed economies grow faster by leveraging the dynamism of more developed economies, and by exploiting the complementarities in a mutually beneficial manner. Regional cooperation can also help in addressing common challenges, such as shared vulnerabilities and in supporting common objectives.

ii. Human

The onset of the Fourth Industrial Revolution brought about by digitalisation, robotics, artificial intelligence, big data analytics, advancement of automation and the advent of other new technologies that bring about sweeping changes in our lives and the way we do business.

The challenge is how to ensure no one is left behind in the age of disruption. Some will be slow on the uptake but others will be faster. It is important that initiatives and programmes for APEC 2020 is designed to addresses disruption and inequality, as inequality is bad for economic growth, and bad for social well-being.

iii. The Future

The year 2020 signals the maturity of Bogor Goals that was launched in 1994. Malaysia is honoured to be entrusted with the responsibility to lead the charting of a new Vision for APEC post-2020 together with the other economies. This new Vision will be the future for APEC.