



PRESS RELEASE

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Malaysia achieves high human development index for the first time ever

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 9 November 2006 – This year's Human Development Report (HDR) focuses on water for livelihoods. It shows that access to water as a productive resource is increasingly compromised by environmental stress, climate change and unequal rights. The HDR 2006 also analyzes how successful cooperation in the management of shared waters can produce benefits for human development at many levels.

In Malaysia, the water supply coverage was about 98 per cent of urban population and 92 per cent of rural population in 2005. Increased access to improved water sources has been a powerful factor in improving health and reducing the spread of infectious diseases in Malaysia, especially among rural communities.

The HDR is published annually as UNDP's flagship report. In this year's HDR, Malaysia is noted to have achieved high human development index (HDI), 0.805, for the first time since the introduction of the HDI. This compares with a figure of 0.659 in 1980 and 0.723 in 1990.

Malaysia is also ranked 15th among 102 developing countries in the Human Poverty Index (HPI), up one place from 2005. The HPI represents a multi-dimensional alternative to the \$1 a day (PPP US\$) poverty measure. Only Singapore (which is ranked 7th) is higher among Asian developing countries.

Dr Richard Leete, UNDP Resident Representative for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam, noted that "Malaysia has much to be proud of with its tremendous achievements on a broad range of development indicators. Malaysia's openness to international trade has led to three and a half decades of rapid economic growth. And with economic growth, coupled with modern sector employment creation, has come exemplary poverty reduction and now high human development".

The human development index (HDI) looks beyond GDP to a broader definition of well-being. It provides a composite measure of three dimensions of human development: living a long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy), being educated (measured by adult literacy and enrolment at the primary, secondary and tertiary level) and having a decent standard of living (measured by purchasing power parity, PPP, income).

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NOTE TO EDITOR

UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and our wide range of partners. Its current priority is to help all countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

To read more about the work that UNDP does in Malaysia, please visit our website at www.undp.org.my

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