



International
Labour
Organization

The ILO in Malaysia

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► At a glance

Malaysia joined the ILO in 1957

Key areas of collaboration

- Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work including child labour and forced labour
- Migrant workers' rights
- Labour law reforms and industrial relations
- Social protection
- Strengthening supply chains
- Skills and employability

Constituents

- Government of Malaysia
- Ministry of Human Resources
- Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC)
- Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF)

Conventions ratified

Malaysia has ratified 18 ILO conventions including 7 out of 10 fundamental conventions

► Towards decent work for all in Malaysia

Malaysia and the ILO collaborate to advance labour standards and decent work amid Malaysia's rapid socio-economic growth, aiming for high-income status by 2028. Despite progress in raising living standards, challenges like youth unemployment and job inequality remain.

Efforts focus on boosting labour participation through skills development and youth employment, supported by improved labour market data and evidence-based policies. Priorities include combating child and forced labour in high-risk sectors, protecting platform and domestic workers and enhancing workers' digital skills and AI capabilities to respond to future labour market demands. The partnership also strengthens social protection, supply chains and labour migration governance.

The ILO also supports Malaysia's contributions to ASEAN and serves as the recognized technical partner for Malaysia in skills development. It collaborates on initiatives such as the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour, and promotes the ratification of ILO conventions, fostering sustainable, inclusive growth and adherence to international labour standards.

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Labour market indicators

- Population (2024): 34.1 million
- GDP per capita (2024): US\$13,310
- Labour force participation rate (2024): 70.4%
- Employment-population ratio (2024): 68.1%
- Unemployment rate (2024): 3.3%
- Number of registered migrant workers (2024): 2.5 million (as of August 2024)

Source: Ministry of Finance in its 2025 Economic Outlook and International Labour Standards Country Profile for Malaysia

► How do we work together?

The ILO and its government, employer and worker constituents in Malaysia are working together in a number of key areas:

- **Labour laws and industrial relations:** Strengthening the country's labour law and industrial relations framework through legal and regulatory reform, outreach, labour inspection assessment, strategic planning and capacity building.
- **Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, with focus on forced labour and child labour:** Reducing forced labour and child labour through an improved policy framework, awareness-raising, better enforcement and enhanced capacities of social partners. Addressing child labour at the grassroots level by providing access to education and training for children working on plantations in Sabah.
- **Socio-economic inclusion:** Enhancing employment opportunities and social protection for persons with disabilities.
- **Social protection:** Strengthening the social protection system to provide sustainable and adequate benefits on a universal coverage basis throughout the lifecycle, especially for people in vulnerable situations.
- **Strengthening value chains:** Encouraging responsible business conduct through decent work initiatives in value chains.
- **Migrant workers' rights:** Improving policies and their implementation, strengthening the provision of information and services to migrant workers in a gender-sensitive manner, ensuring decent work, and fostering inclusive growth through labour migration in ASEAN.

► What have ILO and Malaysia achieved together?

- Progress in the Malaysian rubber industry in addressing forced labour and recruitment challenges is paving the way for broader environmental, social, and governance (ESG) regulations.
- Implemented inclusive skills development and industry-led Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) by undertaking sectoral approaches.
- Assisted in the ratification and application of key conventions aimed at abolishing forced labour as well as strengthening labour rights and the occupational safety and health framework.
- Successfully integrated the ILO's Decent Work Agenda into national policies, fostering inclusive employment strategies.
- Contributed to the design of a comprehensive social protection system, providing safety nets for vulnerable workers and their extension to migrant workers.
- Developed and implemented a national framework for occupational safety and health, improving workplace safety standards.
- Strengthened tripartite dialogue among government, employers, and workers, promoting collaborative labour policy-making.
- Incorporated the labour dimensions in the Business and Human Rights National Action Plan (BHRNAP).
- Supported young Malaysians to build successful careers in the food services industry.

What is the International Labour Organization?

The International Labour Organization is the United Nations agency for the world of work. We bring together governments, employers and workers to drive a human-centred approach to the future of work through employment creation, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue.