



**KEMENTERIAN PEMBANGUNAN
USAHAWAN DAN KOPERASI**
Ministry of Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives

MEDIA RELEASE

ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION (APEC) SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE (SME) BUSINESS FORUM 2020, 13-15 DECEMBER 2020, SHENZHEN, CHINA

Malaysia, together with other APEC economies is committed in carrying out structural reforms and sound economic policies that would promote innovation and improve productivity.

Among the main focus include the digitalisation of small and informal businesses, groups severely affected by the pandemic, which is seen as a vital move in post COVID-19 recovery.

Minister of Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Malaysia, YB Dato Sri Dr. Haji Wan Junaidi said digitalisation, innovation and technology play a pivotal role in in building resilient small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

“Digitalisation could certainly improve productivity at an estimated average of 26%, based on studies conducted by APEC economies, and bring about other enormous potentials that will steer SMEs towards speedy recovery and revival,” he said during his opening remarks presented virtually at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME) Business Forum 2020 in Shenzhen, China on 14 December 2020. This echoes the 26th SME Ministerial Statement of which YB Minister presided as the Chair on 23 October 2020.

Organised by the China Centre for Promotion of SME Development (CCP) in Shenzhen, this year’s forum is themed “Promoting Resilience and Sustainability of SMEs”. It is an established platform since 2001 under the framework of APEC. It aims to foster economic cooperation for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Dr Wan Junaidi further said digital transformation of SMEs has been wisely and suitably accelerated in the midst of COVID-19 crisis. Innovation and technology will help enhance SMEs’ resiliency against COVID-19 economic shocks.

“The transformation will bring positive correlation to SMEs’ productivity, inclusivity and sustainable business activities for this new normal. As well, it will help find new customers beyond borders”.

Nevertheless, despite all the aforementioned benefits of digital transformation, he pointed out that going digital is not an easy process and has its own set of challenges.

“Digital-related issues, shortcomings and infrastructure gap clearly needed addressing by the APEC economies. These include security and privacy concerns, lack of expertise, talent and knowledge in digitalisation initiatives, limited budget, lack of access to connectivity and lack of coordinated digitalisation strategy.

“Therefore, in the spirit of APEC, it is our utmost duty to strengthen our collaboration and cooperation to help our SMEs overcome all the challenges in this time of heightened crisis,” he added.

Dr Wan Junaidi reiterated that APEC economies and SMEs have to pivot, prioritise and progress in order to navigate the region towards recovery along the path of strong, balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure economic growth.

“The natural way forward is for APEC SMEs to accelerate the transformation of their business models and embrace digitalisation for the new normal”, echoed the minister.

MINISTRY OF ENTREPRENEUR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATIVES
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