

# Chairman's Foreword


The COVID-19 crisis has magnified socio-economic inequalities and fragile healthcare systems globally, highlighting the need to strengthen the resilience of societies to pandemics and other similar emergencies. In the last financial year, the short to medium-term focus for governments worldwide have been on fortifying public health systems, accelerating mass vaccination programmes, and tackling the immediate economic impacts of the pandemic. However, in the medium to longer-term, the essential element of an inclusive, green, and resilient recovery will enhance aspects of human health and well-being and are influenced by our collective response to climate change.

At YSD, while we ramped up our pandemic and natural disaster response work through numerous projects under our Community & Health pillar, we put equal importance on the projects under our Environment pillar, with many focusing on climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as community empowerment. From protecting and preserving vulnerable and endangered wildlife species to supporting environmental research via scholarships, reforestation initiatives, as well as seascape conservation and community empowerment, YSD remains committed to playing a significant role in the betterment and restoration of the environment.

**RM1.20 Mil**  
for a community-based  
mangrove conservation  
in Perak

**525K Trees**  
planted cumulatively  
with the Sime Darby  
Plant-A-Tree Programme

**RM1.54 Mil**  
committed to providing  
15 postgraduate  
scholarships focusing  
on sustainability



Partnering with the Global Environment Centre (GEC) until July 2023, we allocated RM1.2 million for a community-based mangrove conservation in Perak, which involves two local communities in the rehabilitation and protection of degraded mangrove areas while providing sustainable livelihood means from tourism and non-timber forest products from the mangrove. By the end of the programme, the Sahabat Hutan Bakau Kuala Gula and Sahabat Hutan Bakau Kampung Pasir Panjang Laut communities aim to collectively plant 12,000 seedlings across 8 hectares of degraded mangrove areas.



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While the norm has been redefined, we have a chance to rebuild a better world. YSD remains resolute in our mission to improve lives and deliver sustainable values and impact through our five pillars despite the overwhelming odds of a pandemic.

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**Y.A.M. Tunku Tan Sri  
Imran Ibni Almarhum  
Tuanku Ja'afar**







Another endeavour carried out to mitigate climate change through replanting and biodiversity conservation efforts is the Sime Darby Plant-A-Tree (SDPAT) programme at Kamuning Estate, Sungai Siput, Perak. Dubbed the 'Creation of Stepping Stones' project, it aims to connect forest patches within the estate to nearby forest reserves for wildlife corridor preservation. With more than half a million trees planted cumulatively, the SDPAT programme, which began in 2008, has established arboretums in SD Plantation estate areas, creating an invaluable gene bank for Malaysia's endemic tree species as well as endangered, rare and threatened (ERT) ones. YSD is looking towards supporting more projects with reliable and effective partners to plant ERT trees for conservation, as well as rehabilitation of forests, riparian areas, mangroves and peatlands.

On the research and development front of environmental conservation, we began another significant chapter with the launch of the UKM-YSD Chair for Sustainability by YB Khairy Jamaluddin, who was the Science, Technology and Innovation Minister. The multi-stakeholder partnership involving Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Sime Darby Plantation will continue the excellent work of two previous UKM-YSD Chairs towards an even more significant impact. On top of the RM15 million endowment fund for the new Chair, YSD also committed over RM1.54 million to provide 15 postgraduate scholarships, with at least half of the candidates coming from underprivileged backgrounds. The Chair also promotes climate change adaptation and mitigation through research for new or improved policy and community programmes to effect long-term behavioural changes among local communities, especially among the disadvantaged.

We also believe in the compelling benefits of wildlife conservation for humans, the environment, and animals. It is essential to protect wildlife as the extinction of just one species would bring a domino effect on an entire ecosystem. Conserving wildlife also means conserving their habitat of trees and forests and is also vital to address climate change issues and our resistance to infectious diseases. This is the reason we have extended partnerships to bolster anti-poaching efforts with the Perak State Parks Corporation as well as with Sabah Forestry Department and Danau Girang Field Centre, and for marine conservation with Reef Check Malaysia and Marine Research Foundation. Additionally, we also forged new collaborations with the Lang Tengah Turtle Watch (LTTW) project team to conserve sea turtles and their feeding habitat; the Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC) to support the Sarawak Red Langur conservation project, and with Nature Based Solutions (NBS) to improve anti-poaching enforcement in the Kenyir State Park, Terengganu.

The pandemic had also upended many initiatives under other YSD pillars due to activity postponements and cancellations, but I am proud that many beneficiaries found innovative ways to surmount COVID-19 challenges. For instance, the Sime Darby Foundation Track Cycling Team (SDFTCT) had found means to train and compete to prepare for the Tokyo Olympics 2020. We are proud to see our SDFTCT athlete Muhammad Shah Firdaus Sahrom wave the Malaysian flag at the Tokyo Olympics 2020, alongside Dato' Azizulhasni Awang, who won the silver medal. SDFTCT's Shah competed spectacularly at the Men's Keirin event while displaying the highest level of tenacity and winning a race immediately after getting up from a bad crash. And with Fadhil being recently ranked first in the world men's elite time trial by the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) and Anis performing as she is now, we have high hopes that the three of them are en route to Paris 2024.



The biennial Yayasan Sime Darby Arts Festival was not spared either. The event was initially postponed from August 2020 to September 2021, but multiple iterations of restrictions on public gatherings and events throughout the year had affected its planning and implementation. The Festival will now be held towards the end of 2022 by employing a hybrid format of having both physical and online activities, which will hopefully attract more attendees and create an even more significant impact. By offering virtual access to certain of its activities, the event may provide exposure to Malaysian arts and culture among global citizens.

We commend our long-term partner ASK Dance Company (ADC), for adopting digital solutions to conduct the 4th and 5th instalment of Forging Traditions: Beyond Borders traditional dance workshops. I am proud to note that YSD's support over the past decade had assisted ADC to become the first dance company in Malaysia that provides free online dance lessons and assessments; a platform recognised by the Sports, Co-curricular and Arts Department of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and an influential incubator for local young dance talents.

In a similar vein, in collaboration with our technical partner Chumbaka, the Sime Darby Young Innovators Challenge 2020 (SDYIC 2020) became the first-ever edition since 2016 to have been conducted entirely online, a decision made ahead of the onset of COVID-19 and helped circumvent the challenges of restricted movement measures. Even though schools all over the country faced challenges to keep up with their curricular and extracurricular plans due to the pandemic, SDYIC 2020 was able to increase the number of participating schools and fill in a significant education gap. Meanwhile, SDYIC 2021 has also been planned to be conducted entirely online, but with a new focus on a unique digital platform created for the SDYIC alumni that will allow former participants and teachers to share and inspire their peers through knowledge-sharing.

While the norm has been redefined, we have a chance to rebuild a better world. YSD remains resolute in our mission to improve lives and deliver sustainable values and impact through our five pillars despite the overwhelming odds of a pandemic. While numerous plans had been thwarted, the resourcefulness, creativity and perseverance demonstrated by our partners and beneficiaries in the way they navigate pandemic challenges have inspired us in many ways. We are continuously and immensely grateful to our three donor companies – Sime Darby Berhad, Sime Darby Plantation Berhad and Sime Darby Property Berhad, for their confidence in us to carry out impactful CSR projects as their philanthropic arm in these times of various challenges. May we continue to break down silos and take joint action to promote planetary health on our path to forge resilience in communities, the environment, and the world.