

## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY (MITI) MALAYSIA



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Secretary General,  
MITI

Heartiest congratulations on the publication of the 2019-20 edition of the MASSA Annual Report!

The year 2019 was an eventful one. On the international front, we finally saw some clarity on Brexit, the first ever impeachment inquiry of a sitting US President, and a trade war that deescalated before escalating again. In Malaysia, we experienced our fair share of the good and the bad, ranging from launch of new policy vehicles to minor disruptions in our economic environment as a result of global uncertainties.

In October 2019, we witnessed the launch of the Shared Prosperity Vision (SPV) 2030. This was a momentous occasion for a number of reasons, largely because the SPV 2030 marked the Government's renewed commitment in ensuring that economic prosperity permeates across all sectors of the society, particularly the economically-disadvantaged, under-privileged and marginalised groups.

The Malaysian economy grew at a steady 4.3% in 2019. This is a clear indication of our resilience and buoyancy, despite being faced with domestic and external challenges. Some conventional economic sectors however, encountered difficulties in responding adequately to the accelerated changes brought about by disruptive technologies and the advent of digitalisation.

Throughout the year, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) continued to pursue various initiatives to further propel the development of our

industries and harness the full potential of trade and investment opportunities that are available to Malaysia. The year also saw the introduction of the Government-funded Readiness Assessment (RA) initiative, a flagship programme under the Industry4WRD policy, which aims to identify SMEs that have the potential to scale-up their technology adoption and become future-proof. Thus far, a total of 508 SMEs have benefitted from this initiative. Going forward, MITI is hopeful that this number will grow significantly.

The end of 2019 introduced us to an invisible enemy, the COVID-19. The pandemic has caused unprecedented health and economic consequences in many parts of the world. The impact of the COVID-19 crisis is as such that the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has forecasted a steep decline of 13 to 32% for international trade transactions, in 2020.

In Malaysia, the Government has been resolute in fighting this pandemic, as well as safeguarding the lives and livelihoods of our people. We will continue to put in place measures that address the health risks associated with COVID-19, while hastening our economic recovery. We will work to strengthen the existing ecosystem in order to nurture sustainable businesses, resilient SMEs and a tenacious workforce.

Every cloud has a silver lining. And every crisis offers a learning opportunity. We now have a renewed sense of appreciation for technology adoption and digitalisation as a matter of necessity and priority, rather than an option. We are also likely to witness more e-commerce transactions, and consequently, a surge in e-marketplaces and related services, including logistics, warehousing and e-wallets. In this context, MITI will continue to pursue policies and programmes that will enable the growth of these digital economy sectors.

Last but not least, our earnest appreciation to MASSA for undertaking substantial efforts to strengthen the trade, economic and investment linkages between Malaysia and partners of the Global South. Let us all work hand-in-hand to navigate our country towards a path of accelerated economic recovery, in a post-COVID world.

Thank you.