

Malaysia Calls for ASEAN Halal Hub to Drive Global Growth

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Malaysia has called for a decisive shift from being merely halal-certified to becoming halal-competitive, as the country and ASEAN seek to capture greater opportunities in the global halal economy projected to reach \$5 trillion.

Delivering the keynote address at the World Halal Business Conference (WHBC 2026), Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs), YB Senator Dr. Zulkifli Hasan, said Malaysia's leadership in the global Islamic economy must translate into greater trade, investment, innovation and international business opportunities.

Malaysia retained the number one position in the Global Islamic Economy Indicator (GIEI) for the 12th consecutive year, while its halal exports reached RM68.52 billion in 2025, growing 10.9 per cent year-on-year.

The Minister emphasised that Malaysia must move from halal-certified to halal-competitive, from market-ready to export-ready and from local players to global champions, with greater emphasis on commercialisation, international market access and participation in global value chains.

He also called for ASEAN to evolve beyond being a halal consumer market into an integrated production, investment, innovation, supply-chain and global trade hub. Malaysia will promote the proposal for an ASEAN Halal Council to strengthen regional cooperation and connectivity across the halal ecosystem.

The 18th edition of WHBC, organised by Halal Development Corporation Berhad (HDC) as part of the Global Halal Summit (GHaS) 2026, also translated dialogue into tangible industry collaboration through two MOU exchanges.

HDC formalised a strategic collaboration with King's Park Development Sdn Bhd to strengthen the halal ecosystem through advisory, technical guidance and capacity-building initiatives.

Meanwhile, Tradewinds (M) Berhad and Saudi Arabia's Tanmiah Food Company signed an MOU to explore halal protein opportunities spanning production, sourcing, importation, further processing and distribution in Malaysia and the Asia-Pacific region.

WHBC 2026 featured high-level discussions on halal diplomacy, the global Islamic economy, halal export commercialisation and Islamic finance, emphasising the need to translate Malaysia's halal strengths into greater international trade and investment opportunities.

The Minister said the future of the halal economy should ultimately be measured not only by the number of halal-certified products, but by the number of companies achieving global growth, investment attracted, value created, quality jobs generated and deeper integration into ASEAN and global value chains.