MERCY Malaysia and Yayasan Sime Darby Restore Access to Safe Water and Sanitation for Fire-Affected Community in Kampung Bahagia, Sandakan

Sandakan, 4 November 2026 – Residents of Kampung Bahagia who are rebuilding their lives after this year's fire now have safer access to water and sanitation, as MERCY Malaysia and Yayasan Sime Darby (YSD) today officially launched new water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities for the community at a ceremony held at Pusat Pembangunan Kemanusiaan Kanak-Kanak Kampung Bahagia. The ceremony was followed by a site visit to the facilities. Made possible by a RM300,000 contribution from YSD and delivered on the ground by MERCY Malaysia, the **WASH Response Project for Kampung Bahagia, Sandakan** restores essential water and sanitation facilities for residents affected by the fire that struck the settlement.

On 19 April 2026, a major fire swept through the coastal settlement of Kampung Bahagia, destroying approximately 9.81 hectares and affecting an estimated 3,000 residents. Beyond the loss of homes, the fire left residents facing serious challenges in accessing safe water and sanitation facilities. Without these basic services, affected families were exposed to greater public health risks associated with inadequate sanitation and unsafe water access.

To address these needs, MERCY Malaysia led the on-the-ground response, working alongside local craftsmen to build four temporary Tandas Mandi Cuci (TMC), which are communal facilities for toilet, bathing and washing use. The teams also installed a water storage tank and a piping network to improve the community's access to water.

The project focuses on three key outcomes: restoring essential WASH facilities, reducing sanitation-related public health risks, and supporting affected residents to recover with improved dignity and living conditions. The new water infrastructure improves access to water for daily needs, while the communal sanitation facilities support safer hygiene practices and healthier living conditions for residents rebuilding their lives after the fire. Beyond meeting daily needs, the additional water storage strengthens the community's preparedness for future emergencies, including providing water to help fight fires.

Commenting on the collaboration, **Dato' Dr Ahmad Faizal Mohd Perdaus, President of MERCY Malaysia**, said: "Clean water and safe sanitation are the foundation of health and dignity, especially for families rebuilding their lives after losing their homes. When the fire devastated Kampung Bahagia, restoring these basic services was among the community's most urgent needs. These facilities mark an important step towards restoring basic living conditions for the residents. We are deeply grateful to Yayasan Sime Darby for its trust and generous support, which has allowed us to respond not only to immediate needs but also to help the community recover in a safer and healthier environment," he added.

Dr. Hajah Yatela Zainal Abidin, Chief Executive Officer of Yayasan Sime Darby said, "When the fire struck Kampung Bahagia in April, our immediate priority was to provide relief to families who had lost their homes and belongings. With the support of employee volunteers and local partners, YSD distributed RM270,000 in emergency assistance to 1,000 affected families. However, we knew that many families would continue to face challenges long after the initial relief efforts.

"Through this additional RM300,000 contribution, we have supported MERCY Malaysia in restoring access to essential water and sanitation facilities, helping to ease the daily challenges faced by residents. We appreciate the efforts of MERCY Malaysia, the local authorities, and community representatives in bringing this project to completion, and we hope these facilities will continue to serve the community throughout its recovery," she added.

MERCY Malaysia carried the project from plan to completion, working with local craftsmen, local authorities and community representatives. The collaboration reflects MERCY Malaysia's ongoing commitment to humanitarian relief and recovery, supporting communities beyond the emergency phase towards sustainable recovery. As a certified World Health Organization (WHO) Emergency Medical Team (Type 1 – Fixed), MERCY Malaysia continues to uphold international humanitarian standards in its operations, ensuring that assistance is timely, impartial and grounded in dignity.

By partnering with Yayasan Sime Darby, MERCY Malaysia continues to strengthen cross-sector collaboration to support the most vulnerable, while contributing to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being).

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About MERCY Malaysia

MERCY Malaysia is an international non-profit humanitarian organisation dedicated to providing emergency relief, advancing sustainable health-related development and strengthening the resilience of vulnerable communities in both crisis and non-crisis settings. The organisation responds to emergencies and crises in Malaysia and around the world through locally informed and evidence-based programmes focused on emergency and crisis response, health-related development, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and disaster risk reduction (DRR). Its work is guided by the Humanitarian-Development Nexus (HDN) approach, which connects immediate humanitarian assistance with long-term development strategies, strengthens local capacity and supports sustainable recovery and stronger, more resilient communities. For more information, visit www.mercy.org.my.

About Yayasan Sime Darby (YSD)

Yayasan Sime Darby or Sime Darby Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Sime Darby Berhad, SD Guthrie Berhad, and Sime Darby Property Berhad. Established in 1982, the foundation revolves around five pillars which are Education, Environment, Community & Health, Sports, and Arts & Culture. Led by an independent Governing Council, the foundation is managed by a dedicated team who works closely with the three (3) YSD donor companies in areas of mutual interest. Since its inception, the foundation has expanded its wings from offering scholarships to outstanding and deserving individuals to funding impactful conservation, outreach and development programmes. For more information, visit www.yayasansimedarby.com

For the latest updates and further information, please follow our social media channels at @mercymalaysia or reach out to us directly at info@mercy.org.my.

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