



PRAxis
PUBLIC POLICY CONFERENCE

REIMAGINING VISIONS OF PROGRESS

18 AUGUST 2026
0900-1645

INTERCONTINENTAL
KUALA LUMPUR

PROGRAMME



ISIS MALAYSIA

The Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia was established on 8 April 1983 with a mandate to advance Malaysia's strategic interests. As an autonomous research organisation, we focus on foreign policy and security; economics and trade; social policy and nation-building; cyber and technology; and climate and energy.

We actively conduct track-two diplomacy, promoting the exchange of views and opinions at the national and international levels. We also play a role in fostering closer regional integration and international cooperation through various forums, such as the Asia-Pacific Roundtable, ASEAN Institutes of Strategic & International Studies network, Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, Network of East Asian Think-Tanks, Network of ASEAN-China Think-Tanks and ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Dialogue.

PRAXIS AND *THE PRAXIS PROCESS*

PRAXIS is ISIS Malaysia's flagship public policy conference, designed to bridge ideas and translate theory into practice. Since 2011, PRAXIS has convened policymakers, the private sector, civil society and academia to engage in topics of national interest.

PRAXIS distinguishes itself through the PRAXIS process – embedding a research process to deliver impact from end-to-end. This process begins well before the conference with closed-door roundtables and consultations that bring together stakeholders and policymakers to identify core issues, shape agendas and frame the questions that matter. Post-conference, discussions are synthesised with cutting-edge analysis from ISIS Malaysia's researchers to produce actionable, pragmatic policy briefs to help advance dialogue to decision.



THEME

As Malaysia approaches 70 years of independence and its major national plans converge on 2030, PRAXIS 2026 asks a deceptively simple question: what comes next? High income, this year's premise insists, is a starting point – not a destination.

Even the world's wealthiest nations are grappling with ecological strain, eroding trust and rising insecurity. Approaching 70 years of independence and looking past the 2030 national milestones, this flagship conference bridges high-level policy with the creative aspirations of Malaysia's youth. By translating theory into concrete institutional choices, PRAXIS 2026 gathers policymakers, experts and the next generation to redefine progress and design a secure, shared future for all Malaysians.



PROGRAMME

18 AUGUST 2026

0830-0900	Arrival and registration <i>Foyer, Level 2</i>
0900-0915	Welcoming remarks Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah Executive Chairman of ISIS Malaysia
0915-0925	Visioning video: Futures we want <i>Grand Ballroom, Level 2</i>
0925-1025	Expert keynote Dr Katherine Trebeck Economic Change Lead at The Next Economy
1025-1040	Break <i>Foyer, Level 2</i>
1040-1150	Session 1A Future of public services as the social commons <i>Ballroom 3, Level 2</i> Session 1B Future of prosperity within ecological boundaries <i>Junior Ballroom, Level 2</i>

1150-1300	Session 2A Future of work and time <i>Ballroom 3, Level 2</i>
	Session 2B Future of Malaysia's place in a new world <i>Junior Ballroom, Level 2</i>
1300-1415	Lunch <i>Serena Brasserie, Lobby Level</i>
1415-1530	Session 3 From future visions to choices in the present <i>Grand Ballroom, Level 2</i>
1530-1630	Closing keynote and fireside chat YB Dato' Sri Azalina Othman Said Minister of Law and Institutional Reform Prime Minister's Department
1630-1645	Closing remarks Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah Executive Chairman of ISIS Malaysia



CLOSING KEYNOTE AND FIRESIDE CHAT



YB Dato' Sri Azalina Othman Said
Minister (Law and Institutional Reform)
Prime Minister's Department

Azalina has held her current portfolio since December 2022. In overseeing the Legal Affairs Division, she actively spearheads major national governance and institutional reforms, including the drafting of the progressive AG-PP Bill to separate the roles of the attorney-general and public prosecutor and proposals for fixed-term limits for the prime minister. She is a former minister of youth and sports, tourism minister and Dewan Rakyat deputy speaker. A lawyer by training, she has contributed significantly to legislative oversight by chairing multiple parliamentary select committees focused on critical socio-legal matters and institutional reforms.

WELCOMING AND CLOSING REMARKS



Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah
Executive Chairman
ISIS Malaysia

Faiz provides high-level counsel to the government on geopolitics, defence and security, as well as the evolving landscape of global geoeconomics. At ISIS Malaysia, he spearheads policy innovation and leads strategic track-two diplomacy. He is the Malaysian representative to the ASEAN Regional Forum Experts and Eminent Persons, and co-chair of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. He is also a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Future Council on Good Governance and a distinguished adjunct professor of the International Islamic University of Malaysia.

EXPERT KEYNOTE

What if the thinking and policies that have got countries to where they are today are no longer the thinking and policies that meet the challenges of our times? What if instead of the assumption that more economic growth, more profit and more money are always the answer, an economy that is designed and delivered to meet the needs of the people and planet is what countries need to prioritise? This talk will outline why it is time for a wellbeing economy, what that means for policy and enterprise, and what it looks like in practice.



Dr Katherine Trebeck
Economic Change Lead
The Next Economy

Trebeck is a political economist, writer and advocate for economic system change. She is also a strategic adviser to the Centre for Policy Development and teaches at the University of Edinburgh. She is a distinguished visitor at the Australian National University's Planetary Health Equity Hothouse; 2024 thinker-in-residence at the Australian Health Promotion Association; new economics senior fellow at the Zoe Institute; and fellow of The Post Growth Institute. She co-founded the Wellbeing Economy Alliance (WEAll) and WEAll Scotland. She instigated the group of Wellbeing Economy Governments (WEGo) – comprising Scotland, New Zealand, Finland, Wales, Iceland and Canada – the story of which is the subject of the documentary *Purpose*.

CONCURRENT SESSION 1A

FUTURE OF PUBLIC SERVICES AS THE SOCIAL COMMONS

This concurrent session imagines a future in which public health, education and social care serve as shared social foundations for everyone, rather than as services increasingly shaped by private markets. It asks how these systems could operate as social commons that are: universally accessible and high quality; organised around dignity, care and capability; and designed so that people across income groups and regions can live, learn, work and age well. What would everyday life feel like if health, education and care formed the bedrock of Malaysia's wellbeing? Why is recentring these foundations essential for a resilient post-high-income Malaysia and what are the policy and institutional changes needed to make this shift possible?

MODERATOR

Tan Heang-Lee
Fellow
ISIS Malaysia

Tan heads the Social Policy and National Integration team. An interdisciplinary researcher, she enjoys connecting the dots across policy areas, with work spanning public health, gender and care. She is a former research associate at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and head of campaigns at the Women's Aid Organisation.

SPEAKERS



Hazwan Najib
Chief Executive Officer
ProtectHealth Corporation

Hazwan's role at ProtectHealth is to strengthen strategic purchasing through public-private partnerships to make healthcare more affordable and accessible for all, in alignment with the Ministry of Health's national agenda. He drives initiatives that advance healthcare payment transformation in Malaysia and foster innovation to improve patient outcomes and care quality. He is committed to building a competitive and resilient health financing ecosystem that promotes sustainability and equity for all Malaysians.



Kularetnam Vijayakumar
Chief Executive Officer
Tunku Abdul Rahman Foundation (YTAR)

Kularetnam specialises in education and higher education. At YTAR, he leads initiatives to expand access to higher education, develop leadership and build capacity for a more progressive, equitable and inclusive Malaysia. He advocates more holistic approaches to higher education and scholarship admissions, and has spoken publicly about moving beyond test scores to consider how education can support human flourishing.



Lee Min Hui
Social Protection Specialist (Care and Support Systems)
UNICEF Malaysia

Lee leads the care and support systems portfolio, focusing on every child's and family's right to care and to be cared for. She works at the intersection of research, programme management and advocacy to strengthen care and support systems for children in Malaysia. She is a former senior analyst at ISIS Malaysia, where she led the Social Policy and National Integration team and published research on the care economy, women's political and workforce participation, ageing and social welfare.



Dr Yap Wei Aun
Chief Executive Officer
Health Transformation Office
Ministry of Health

Yap is a former consultant for the World Bank and World Health Organisation. He served as country technical director for the Malaysia Health Systems Research project, a collaboration between the Ministry of Health and Harvard University. His clinical experience includes serving on the frontlines in a variety of hospital and clinic settings in the United Kingdom, rural Sarawak and Kuala Lumpur.

CONCURRENT SESSION 1B

FUTURE OF PROSPERITY WITHIN ECOLOGICAL BOUNDARIES

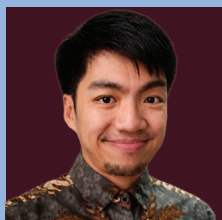
This concurrent session looks towards futures in which Malaysia thrives within ecological limits while expanding opportunities for human flourishing. It considers what it would mean to treat land, water, forests, cities and energy systems as shared ecological commons, managed to sustain life and livelihoods over generations rather than to maximise extraction for short-term gain. Panellists will explore how such futures could reshape development priorities, spatial planning and risk management in the face of climate risk and environmental degradation. What might a liveable, lower-carbon Malaysia look like for households and communities? How could aligning economic choices with ecological realities underpin a more secure, just and prosperous post-high-income future?

MODERATOR

Zayana Zaikariah
Senior Researcher
ISIS Malaysia

Zayana's work spans the intersection of climate policy and emerging economic sectors, energy transition, climate adaptation and broader environmental sustainability. She has authored multiple research papers covering nature-positive finance, Malaysia's positioning in the critical minerals and rare earth supply chain and most recently, the governance of AI infrastructure and its environmental implications.

SPEAKERS



Dr Goh Chun Sheng
Assistant Professor
Institute of Asian Studies
Universiti Brunei Darussalam

Goh's career spans research, education, government and intergovernmental organisations. He began his career as a researcher at Utrecht University in the Netherlands, where he participated in projects on international trade and large-scale investments in the bioeconomy, conducting extensive field studies in Kalimantan. He subsequently worked at Malaysia's National Innovation Agency, where he was involved in the implementation of the National Biomass Strategy 2020, with a particular focus on Malaysian Borneo. His monograph, *Transforming Borneo: From Land Exploitation to Sustainable Development*, was published in 2023.



Nithi Nesadurai
President
Environmental Protection Society Malaysia (EPSM)

Nithi joined EPSM, an all-volunteer-run society, in 1983. Under his tenure as president, the society introduced three sustainability instruments in Malaysia — Local Agenda 21, Global Reporting Initiative and ecological footprint analysis — as part of its sustainable living in Malaysia programme. He is also director and regional coordinator of Climate Action Network Southeast Asia, which comprises 40 civil society organisations in 10 countries. He has been a participant in the Conference of Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change since COP6.



Dr Serina Rahman
Lecturer
Department of Southeast Asian Studies
National University of Singapore

Serina is an associate fellow in the Malaysia Studies Programme at ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore. She teaches environmental politics, religion, magic and anything about Southeast Asia by sea. Trained as a conservation scientist specialising in seagrass human-habitat interactions, her practice is in community empowerment through citizen science, community research and ecotourism. She also studies artisanal fisheries resource management at Kelab Alami, a community organisation in Johor that she co-founded in 2008. Her research includes (un)sustainable development, Malaysian rural politics and political ecology. Serina is an Iskandar Malaysia social hero award winner for environmental protection and Malaysia's ambassador for Citizen Science Asia.

CONCURRENT SESSION 2A

FUTURE OF WORK AND TIME

This concurrent session looks towards futures in which work and livelihoods in Malaysia are organised around security, time and voice, alongside income. Panellists will imagine what “good work” and “time to live” could look like in a post-high-income Malaysia: stable livelihoods, working hours compatible with care and rest, and workplaces where people have a meaningful say over their conditions. How might changes in labour standards and social protections – as well as different ways of organising jobs, workplaces and ownership – reduce precarity and stress while supporting innovation and productivity? What would it take for work to support, rather than undermine, a good life?

MODERATOR

Shakira Teh Sharifuddin
Senior Economist
The World Bank

Shakira joined the World Bank in 2016 and is currently a senior economist at the bank's Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Finance Hub in Kuala Lumpur. Her work focuses on macroeconomics, female labour force participation, childcare provision, education reform, learning loss and recovery, and adult skills assessment. She is a former economist at Bank Negara Malaysia and was briefly attached to the International Monetary Fund in Washington.

SPEAKERS



Dr Christopher Choong
Deputy Director of Research
Khazanah Research Institute

Choong is a senior fellow at the Atlantic Fellows for Social and Economic Equity at the International Inequalities Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science. He is also an adjunct associate professor with the Jeffrey Sachs Centre on Sustainable Development, Sunway University.



Datuk Mohamed Shafie BP Mammal
President
Union Network International-Malaysia Labour Centre (UNI-MLC)

Shafie is a veteran trade unionist with an illustrious career spanning 47 years, from 1979 to 2026. As president of UNI-MLC, he champions workers' rights across the services sector. He is a former deputy president of the Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services and deputy president of the Malaysian Trades Union Congress. Regionally, he serves as general-secretary of the ASEAN Services Employees Trade Union Council and internationally, he sits on the board of UNI Global Union, Geneva, Switzerland.



Dr Katherine Trebeck
Economic Change Lead
The Next Economy

Trebeck is a political economist, writer and advocate for economic system change. She is also a strategic adviser to the Centre for Policy Development and teaches at the University of Edinburgh. She is a distinguished visitor at the Australian National University's Planetary Health Equity Hothouse; 2024 thinker-in-residence at the Australian Health Promotion Association; new economics senior fellow at the Zoe Institute; and fellow of The Post Growth Institute. She co-founded the Wellbeing Economy Alliance (WEAll) and WEAll Scotland. She instigated the group of Wellbeing Economy Governments (WEGo) — comprising Scotland, New Zealand, Finland, Wales, Iceland and Canada — the story of which is the subject of the documentary *Purpose*.

CONCURRENT SESSION 2B

FUTURE OF MALAYSIA'S PLACE IN A NEW WORLD

This concurrent session looks beyond Malaysia's borders to imagine possible futures for how the country engages with the world amid fragmentation, war and climate collapse. It will explore visions for a post-high-income development model oriented towards peace, shared prosperity and mutual benefit, rather than extractive growth models or volatile external markets. Panellists will consider how these futures could reshape Malaysia's trade and industrial strategies, partnerships with the Global South and place in a new world economic order. What role could a post-high-income Malaysia play in shaping a more just and inclusive global economic community in the coming decade? And how could external engagement, in turn, better serve the wellbeing of all Malaysians?

MODERATOR

Jaideep Singh
Analyst
ISIS Malaysia

Jaideep is an analyst in the Economics, Trade and Regional Integration team. His research focuses on industrial and trade policies, including their interplay in geoeconomics. He is a former special officer to Malaysia's deputy investment, trade and industry minister and Overseas Development Institute fellow in Zanzibar, Tanzania.

SPEAKERS

Dr Mari Pangestu
Special Envoy of the President
Indonesia

Mari is the special envoy for international trade and multilateral cooperation, and vice-chair of the National Economic Council. She is a former special envoy for climate finance and advised the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime and Investment Affairs on sustainability, energy transition and blended finance. She is also the former Indonesian trade minister and minister of tourism and creative economy. She has more than 30 years' experience across academia, diplomacy, international organisations and government. Mari is currently professor of international economics at the University of Indonesia and a board member of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Jakarta.



Dr Pia Dannhauer
Associate
German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP)

Dannhauer researches Germany's relations with Southeast Asia at SWP. She is also a senior research fellow at the Perth USAsia Centre, where she led research and programmes on Southeast Asia from 2023 to 2025. She is a former researcher at the Asia-Pacific Research and Advice Network, an internal think-tank supporting European Union decisionmakers.



Dr Sanchita Basu Das
Senior Economist
Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Sanchita is attached to the Regional Cooperation and Integration Division in ADB's Economic Research and Development Impact Department. She contributes to the division's flagship publications, knowledge products and analytical studies. Her research interests include regional cooperation initiatives and related issues, such as trade, logistics, industrial corridors, tourism, the digital economy and institutions. She is a former lead researcher at the ASEAN Studies Centre of ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, as well as a former fellow of the regional economic studies programme, coordinator of the Singapore APEC Studies Centre and co-editor of the *Journal of Southeast Asian Economies*.



Prof Yeah Kim Leng
Director of Economic Studies Programme
Jeffrey Cheah Institute on Southeast Asia
Sunway University

Yeah was appointed professor of economics at Sunway University in 2016. Prior to academia, he spent nearly three decades in the private sector, most notably as chief economist at the country's pioneer credit rating agency. He currently serves as president of the Malaysian Economic Association and as a member of the National Wage Consultative Council, as well as the Policy Advisory Committee to the Prime Minister. He is also a former external member of Bank Negara Malaysia's Monetary Policy Committee.

SESSION 3

FROM FUTURE VISIONS TO CHOICES IN THE PRESENT

This closing plenary explores the contours of a hopeful, post-high-income Malaysia that have emerged from today's conversations. Drawing on the futures articulated in the domain sessions and the pre-conference visioning exercise, panellists will consider what these visions suggest about the meaning of progress for Malaysia, and how this compares with the direction in which current institutions, plans and incentives are pointing. They will also examine present-day constraints – fiscal, institutional and social – to identify the near-term choices in policy, institutions and practice that hold the most promise. How, within the limits of the present, can we begin to prefigure the Malaysia we are trying to become?

MODERATOR

Calvin Cheng
Director
ISIS Malaysia

Cheng heads the Economics, Trade and Regional Integration team, where he oversees the institute's economic policy research across its work areas and coordinates the economic programme's projects and engagements. His research covers topics in applied economics, centred on labour economics, jobs, wellbeing and social protection. Some of his current projects examine how emerging technologies shape the future of work, society and development.

SPEAKERS

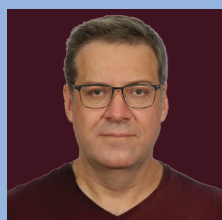
Emeritus Prof Datuk Norma Mansor
Director
Social Wellbeing Research Centre (SWRC)
Universiti Malaya

Norma has served as SWRC director since 2013. Under her leadership, the centre has grown into a prominent hub for interdisciplinary research in social policy, ageing and social protection. She is a former secretary of the National Economic Advisory Council in the Prime Minister's Department, dean of the Faculty of Economics and Administration at Universiti Malaya and executive director of the International Institute of Public Policy and Management. She has served as an adviser and consultant to various international organisations, including the United Nations Development Programme, World Bank, International Labour Organisation, European Union and Asian Development Bank.



Nurhisham Hussein
Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister

Nurhisham currently serves as head of the secretariat of Pasukan Petugas Pengurusan Krisis (Crisis Management Task Force). He plays a key advisory role, supporting the prime minister on matters relating to the economy, investments and capital markets, social protection, and other relevant areas. He is a former chief strategy officer at the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) and served as head of the Economics and Capital Markets Department, overseeing economic surveillance of more than 20 global economies and contributing to EPF's investment process. He presently sits on the board of directors of ProtectHealth Corporation Sdn Bhd, a Ministry of Health company.



Dr Richard Marshall
Senior Economist
United Nations

Marshall is part of the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. His specialisms include poverty analysis, including multidimensional poverty, growth and inequality dynamics, social protection reforms and industrial policy. In Malaysia, his work focused on the socioeconomic impacts and policy responses to the Covid-19 pandemic; the tracking and reporting of Sustainable Development Goals performance, including supporting Malaysia's Voluntary National Reviews in 2021 and 2025; and research into the challenges faced by the undocumented population in Sabah.

NOTES

SUPPORTERS



SPECIAL THANKS



YAYASAN
TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN



SCAN TO CONNECT
AND DISCOVER MORE