

Zurich Malaysia and OKU Sentral to develop PwD entrepreneurs

Sinar Senyuman Al-Shams programme also assures PwDs of takaful protection

Kuala Lumpur, 7 July 2022 – Zurich Malaysia through its Zurich Franchise Network agency Teras Legacy today formalised a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Persatuan OKU Sentral (OKU Sentral) to support the empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) through entrepreneurship development.

Conceptualised under the programme titled *Sinar Senyuman Al-Shams*, the collaboration makes takaful financial protection easily accessible for PwDs.

The first-in-the-country programme paves way for PwDs to have a successful career in takaful financial services. Zurich Malaysia and Teras Legacy will guide and equip members of OKU Sentral with the skills to succeed. OKU Sentral is supporting with their expertise and knowledge in training their members. This thrust of the programme empowers the PwDs to venture into an avenue untapped until now.

Sinar Senyuman Al-Shams also guarantees registered PwDs of acceptance into the Zurich Takaful Al-Shams protection plan, even those with pre-existing critical illnesses, congenital diseases or ineligible to receive protection from other sources. The Guaranteed Acceptance feature eases the process as it does not require a medical check-up when applying for this takaful plan.

OKU Sentral President Senator Datuk Ras Adiba Radzi remarked, “Socio-economic resilience is one of the key themes for Malaysia. This entails developing better social protection, especially for vulnerable segments of society. Research showed that PwDs are at risk of becoming poor due to lack of social and economic participation opportunities. The reality is that it is



very challenging for PwDs to obtain protection and employment. To succeed we must focus beyond protection. We must intensify efforts to involve PwDs in the economy. As the representative for PwDs in Dewan Negara, I am encouraged by Zurich Malaysia and Teras Legacy's participation in supporting PwDs for more inclusive development."

Zurich Takaful Chief Executive Officer Nazrul Hisham Abd Hamid said, "Malaysians' wellbeing is our priority. We strive to create a lasting positive impact in community, including for PwDs who are significant members of society. We want to come alongside them in their effort to be more self-reliant and have protection. This *Sinar Senyuman Al-Shams* programme supports PwDs in leading a dignified life and contributing to nation-building. We are committing resources to help interested PwDs chart a career in takaful financial services. This cause resonates with our belief that every Malaysian deserves to have protection and a brighter future."

There are over 580,000 registered PwDs in Malaysia. Many face challenges in obtaining equal employment opportunities due to limited policies and practices.

Their situation is compounded by difficulties in obtaining protection. The takaful penetration rate in the country is also low, at 18.6% in 2021. The Impact of Pandemic on Protection survey by Zurich Malaysia showed that 84% of Malaysians had greater awareness of the need to have protection but not all acted as 38% of respondents still do not have insurance or takaful.

Zurich Malaysia launched the Takaful Al-Shams with Guaranteed Acceptance in April this year to make protection more accessible and easier for all Malaysians. The plan is flexible and can grow with its contributors as they progress through life, such as marriage and children.

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Zurich Malaysia is a collective reference term for the Zurich Insurance Group (Zurich) business subsidiaries operating in Malaysia: Zurich General Insurance Malaysia Berhad, Zurich Life Insurance Malaysia Berhad, Zurich General Takaful Malaysia Berhad and Zurich Takaful Malaysia Berhad. Zurich Malaysia offers a broad range of comprehensive insurance and takaful solutions; helping individuals as well as business owners understand and protect themselves, their businesses, and their assets from risk. Zurich Malaysia has an integrated branch network in major cities nationwide as well as dedicated agency and distribution channels nationwide to serve the needs of its customers. For further information on Zurich Malaysia, visit www.zurich.com.my.