

**World Food  
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# WFP News Release

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## **WFP BOOSTS HUMANITARIAN RAPID RESPONSE CAPACITY IN ASIA WITH NEW BASE IN MALAYSIA**

**KUALA LUMPUR** – The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) today reached a landmark agreement with the Government of Malaysia to establish the first United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) in Asia, based in Subang, Malaysia.

The UNHRD in Subang, the fifth such hub in WFP's global emergency response arsenal, is designed to deliver humanitarian relief items within 48 hours of a crisis occurring. It will provide storage, logistics support and services to UN and other humanitarian agencies within the Asian region, and possibly beyond.

"We applaud the Government of Malaysia's visionary decision to host this critically important hub to support all nations within the Asia-Pacific region with rapid response capacity," said Deputy Executive Director Amir Abdulla, who signed the Basic Agreement with Ministry of Foreign Affairs Secretary, General H.E. Tan Sri Rastam Mohd Isa.

In addition to hosting the UNHRD, the Government of Malaysia has agreed to build offices, warehouses, and a training centre, as well as contribute US\$1 million annually towards the running costs of the UNHRD network. WFP will also seek support from other Asian countries to support the UNHRD in Subang.

"Malaysia has always been an important partner for WFP as a palm-oil producing country, and now with its generous decision to host and fund this strategic hub it is supporting the entire region," Abdulla added.

Since 2001, WFP has purchased almost 300,000 metric tons of palm oil produced in Malaysia, valued at US\$218 million. In 2008 alone, WFP spent nearly US\$45 million buying Malaysian palm oil, making Malaysia our 8<sup>th</sup> largest global source of the commodity.

WFP operates UNHRDs around the world as part of its mandate to ensure effective logistics support to the humanitarian community. All bases are strategically located and are staffed with highly experienced personnel to ensure quick deployment of vital assets during crises. Other UNHRDs in the global network are: Italy – for Europe and North Africa; United Arab Emirates – to cover the Middle East and East Africa; Panama –



to cover Latin America and the Caribbean; and Ghana – to cover West Africa. Although the bases are designed for regional specific responses, all are equipped to respond to crises anywhere in the world. During the early days of crisis response to Haiti, all UNHRDs were involved in releasing supplies to support humanitarian operations for the earthquake shattered country.

“WFP already has a long-term and substantial commitment to fighting hunger and saving lives and livelihoods in Asia, but today we mark a new chapter of support to its people,” said Kenro Oshidari, WFP Regional Director for Asia. “This facility will provide support to all countries in Asia and the Pacific, regardless of whether WFP has an operational presence there or not. Now all of Asia and the Pacific will be covered.”

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WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide. In 2010 WFP aims to feed more than 90 million people in 73 countries.

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*WFP has a dedicated ISDN line in Italy for quality two-way interviews with WFP officials.*

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