

Jenis Akhbar : *Wilayah.com*

Tarikh : *06/04/2026*

Edisi / Muka Surat : <https://wilayah.com.my/>

Tajuk : *ASEAN Co-operative Organization Gains ASEAN Status, Expands Role in Driving Inclusive Regional Growth*



ASEAN Co-operative Organization Gains ASEAN Status, Expands Role in Driving Inclusive Regional Growth

PETALING JAYA, April 6 — The ASEAN Co-operative Organization (ACO) has achieved a significant milestone after being formally recognised by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as an accredited entity, paving the way for a stronger role in regional economic development.

The recognition was conveyed through an official letter from ASEAN Secretary-General Kao Kim Hourn to ACO president Abdul Fattah Abdullah, following approval by all member states.

ACO is now listed as a civil society organisation under the ASEAN Charter, enabling structured participation in ASEAN's institutional processes.

Elevating Cooperatives in Regional Development

Abdul Fattah said the recognition marks a turning point for the cooperative movement, positioning it as a strategic contributor to ASEAN's development agenda.

He noted that cooperatives can now engage directly in policy discussions and regional initiatives focused on inclusive growth and community development.

“Cooperatives are no longer peripheral players — they are part of the region's economic framework,” he said.

Participation, however, will be guided by ASEAN's established engagement criteria to ensure effectiveness.

Recognition of Inclusive Economic Model

The move is seen as an acknowledgment of the cooperative model as a viable and sustainable approach to economic development.

Abdul Fattah linked the achievement to Malaysia's policy direction under Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, particularly efforts to strengthen the cooperative sector.

He emphasised that cooperatives are increasingly relevant in addressing economic inequality and promoting shared prosperity.

Broader Market and Collaboration Opportunities

With ASEAN accreditation, ACO is expected to unlock greater access to regional markets, partnerships, and development platforms.

Operating under Angkatan Koperasi Kebangsaan Malaysia Berhad (ANGKASA), the organisation has already been actively promoting regional engagement through initiatives such as the ASEAN Cooperative Dialogue and ASEAN Cooperatives Networking.

These programmes aim to enhance visibility and strengthen collaboration among cooperatives.

From Network to Strategic Driver

Founded in 1977, ACO has long served as a regional network connecting cooperative movements across Southeast Asia.

Efforts to secure ASEAN recognition began in 2014 and have now culminated in formal accreditation. With more than 715,000 cooperatives across ASEAN, the sector is increasingly positioned as a key driver of sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the region.