

**MONITORING AND REVIEW OF SDG 16 PLUS
IN MALAYSIA (2015 – 2020)**

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1 What is Goal 16 Plus in your national context?

Over the past five years between 2016- 2020 there were two significant political development which has had a major impact on Malaysian political history but did not negatively impact development planning in Malaysia.

The first is the change of the Malaysian government. After 61 years¹ the political coalition, the Barisan Nasional (BN) which secured independence from the British in 1957 fell in May 2018. The new government Pakatan Harapan (PH) promised institutional reform² with a focus on human rights, democracy and good governance. They last for only 22 months

The second political change took place when this newly elected PH government which came to power through the ballot box fell in early 2020 due to defections from the PH coalition to form another new political coalition³, the Perikatan Nasional (PN) which came to power during the COVID-19 crisis. The political crisis continued as they have a very small majority which is being contested by parliamentarians.

In a new turn of events to address the rising COVID-19 cases, the PN government advised the Malaysian King to declare a state of emergency⁴ on Jan 12, 2021 for six months till August 2021. In this context the damaging effect to public accountability and democracy is the suspension of parliament sessions. The Prime Minister announced that “Parliament and the State Legislative Assemblies will not sit until a time set by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong”⁵. The Opposition leader in Parliament is challenging this declaration as unconstitutional in the courts⁶.

The CSO Platform of Reform which is made up of about 75 organisations prepared a comprehensive review of the 22 months of the PH government and the first 100 days of the PN government providing an analysis of 11 thematic focus areas. A report released on Oct 24, 2020⁷.

It is in this context of political changes and the COVID 19 pandemic, that Malaysia reviews the 2021 Voluntary National Review (VNR). On the 2030 Agenda and Malaysian development planning the Economic Planning Unit which is the led agency on this matter has been consistent

¹ May 9, 2018: The day that shook Malaysia. <https://www.thesundaily.my/local/may-9-2018-the-day-that-shook-malaysia-IJ856648>

² Ambiga Sreenevasan (2019) Institutional Reform: Rebuilding of the nation must not be delayed. <https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/institutional-reform-rebuilding-nation-must-not-be-delayed>

³ Rash Behari Bhattacharjee and Mohsin Abdullah (2021) Newsmakers 2020: Power shifts from Pakatan Harapan to Perikatan Nasional. <https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/newsmakers-2020-power-shifts-pakatan-harapan-perikatan-nasional>

⁴ Special Announcement of Emergency (2021). <https://www.pmo.gov.my/2021/01/teks-ucapan-pengumuman-khas-darurat/>

⁵ ibid

⁶ Anwar to challenge PM's 'reckless' emergency move in court. <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/01/17/anwar-to-challenge-pms-reckless-emergency-move-in-court/>

⁷ <https://komas.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2020/12/CSO-analysis-report-Final-printing-copy.pdf>

in the socio economic development agenda notwithstanding the change of governments from BN to PH to PN. This is reflected in the development plan documents such as the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2016-2020)⁸ which was launched on May 21, 2015 by the BN government and the Mid Term Review of the Eleventh Malaysia Plan⁹ which was released on Oct 18, 2018 by the PH government. The Twelfth Malaysia Plan (2021- 2025) is due to be launch soon by the PN government.

There are many similarities and consistency in the development agenda in Malaysia with some slight differences in thrust. Malaysian Eleventh Malaysia Plan laid the foundations for an inclusive and sustainable agenda for all Malaysians. It highlighted seven strategic thrust¹⁰ and the Government undertook the mapping with SDGs early on:-

THRUST	THEMES	MAPPING SDGs
1	Enhancing inclusiveness towards an equitable society	SDG 1, 2,5,6,7,10,11
2	Improving wellbeing for all	SDG 2,3,9,11,16
3	Accelerating human capital development for an advanced nation	SDG 4,8
4	Pursuing green growth for sustainability and resilience	SDG 6,7,12,13,14,15
5	Strengthening infrastructure to support economic expansion	SDG 6,7,9
6	Re- engineering economic growth for greater prosperity	SDG 1,6,8,9,14,15,17
7	Transforming public service for productivity	SDG 11, 16

During the Mid Term Review and report, the Malaysia government undertook a mapping of these development thrust with the SDGs¹¹ and from the rest of development plan cycle the PH government altered the thrust to six pillars with an emphasis on institutional reform consistent SDG 16. The six pillars mapped to SDGs are:-

PILLARS	THEMES	MAPPING SDGs
1	Reforming governance towards greater transparency & enhance efficiency of public service	SDG 11, 16
2	Enhancing inclusive development & wellbeing	SDG 1,2,3,5,9,10,11,16
3	Pursing balanced regional development	SDG 6,7,8,9,10,11,16
4	Empowering human capital	SDG 4, 8

⁸ <https://www.pmo.gov.my/dokumenattached/RMK/RMKe-11Book.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.epu.gov.my/en/economic-developments/development-plans/rmk/mid-term-review-eleventh-malaysia-plan-2016-2020>

¹⁰ <https://www.pmo.gov.my/dokumenattached/RMK/RMKe-11Book.pdf> page 26-27

¹¹ <https://www.epu.gov.my/sites/default/files/2020-08/3.%20Overview.pdf> page 11

5	Enhancing environmental sustainability through green growth	SDG 6,7,12,13,14,15
6	Strengthening Economic Growth	SDG 2,6,8,9,14,16 &17

Malaysia presented its first VNR report in July 2017 and the second VNR report will be released in July 2021. This second VNR will be presented in the context of the Twelfth Malaysia Plan (2021-2025) which leads to a decade of SDG implementation in Malaysia.

This review of the first five years 2016 and 2020 therefore is set in this political and development environment. This is an environment in which Parliament will not be meeting to review any of these new development plans.

2 BACKGROUND

The approach undertaken in this national review is to focus on three thematic concerns such as Peaceful Societies, Just Societies and Inclusive Societies. These three are key focus of SDG 16.

While SDG 16 has 12 specific targets and 24 specific indicators, it is also recognised that there are number of other goals, targets and indicators which have cross cutting impact. There are seven other relevant goals, with 34 targets. The SDG 16 plus framework is able to capture these cross cutting sub themes as indicated below under the three major themes on building peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

In the case of the Malaysia review the researcher is dependent on the official data released by the Malaysian Department of Statistics (DOSM) for the macro national data and on other sources for specific data and from the analysis and reporting on civil society organisations and academic monitoring, researching and documenting on specific SDGs. However in the case of the latter it can be cited as micro data but sets a picture of reality on the ground. DOSM data provides quantitative data and the CSO/academic studies are more qualitative data.

3 UNDERSTANDING SDG PLUS 16

The Malaysian Department of Statistics (DOSM) released two comprehensive national data report on SDGs for 2018 and for 2019. They have made this data accessible and have had conversations with CSOs involved in SDGs. They did undertake public awareness on SDG data collection and within the Federal government DOSM has given some priority and visibility on SDGs.

DOSM¹² indicates that they have 51.8% of the data at the indicators level. Therefore 128 out of 247 indicators are available. They have in 2021 provided a score card indicating there was

¹² SDG Indicators. Department of Statistics Malaysia 2019. Page 3

an improvement or positive change or there is a negative change which requires improvement and finally an indication if the status is unchanged.

SDG 16 Targets & Indicators

However on SDG 16 there is very little official data from DOSM. Of the 24 indicators in SDG 16, DOSM only three¹³ are fully available as listed below :-

SDG INDICATORS		Year	Value	Year	Value	Trend
16.1.1	Homicide victims per 100,000	2018	1.0	2019	1.0	Unchanged
16.3.2	Unsentenced detainees as proportion of overall prison population	2018	27.0	2019	27.5	Negative change
16.6.1	Government expenditure as a proportion of budget	2018	102.4	2019	100.9	Negative change

SDG 16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population

The figure given by DOSM is 27.5% and that there is a negative change as there is a rise in the numbers of such cases of unsentenced detainees. This situation has come to public light due to the rise in COVID 19 cases which has resulted in a public discussion¹⁴ This is also because of the provisions compared to overall prison population.

Based on the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) findings¹⁵ it is noted that there are 72,903 inmates in Malaysian prisons but the total capacity in the prisons is only 53,830. This is similar situation in Immigration depots, where there is overcrowded as there are 15,163 detainees in facilities for 12,530

In the context of COVID 19, SUHAKAM¹⁶ made a number of suggestions for the authorities including the Prison Department to consider such as release of “remand prisoners with light or non-violent offences, or drug addicts who pose no threat to the public, and those with chronic illnesses, should either be granted early or at least conditional release”. SUHAKAM also stated that this could be applied “to inmates currently being detained for minor offences or socio-economic problems, senior citizens with existing illnesses, as well as those suffering from mental illnesses”. In this context SUHAKAM also proposed the authorities adopt an approach utilising non-custodial measures, such as when it concerns inmates who are kept detained because they are unable to pay the bail bond.

¹³ Ibid page 45

¹⁴ <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/malaysia-to-implement-early-release-of-inmates-amid-covid-19-outbreaks-behind-bars>

¹⁵ <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/11/12/suhakam-prisons-overcrowded-by-40pc-maximum-capacity-creating-perfect-storm/1921939>

¹⁶ Ibid

On SDG 16 a qualitative analysis can be undertaken through alternative sources, reviews and discussions on a number of key targets and indicators as listed below

Access to Justice (SDG 16.3)

Legal aid is an essential component of having access to justice. It is noted that 80% of the 108,000 accused persons facing trial in the magistrate courts in Malaysia were unrepresented in 2008¹⁷.

In Malaysia legal aid services is provided both by the government and the Bar Council. The government scheme is conducted by Legal Aid Department (LAD)¹⁸ provides legal advice services to all Malaysian citizens. The Legal Aid Act 1971 governs this service which aims to provide legal services.

In the case of the Bar Council the services are coordinated by the National Legal Aid Foundation (NLAF) which handles an average of 8,304 cases per month. The NLAF handles every stage of a criminal case, from arrest, remand, bail application, trial and appeal stages.

In a recent study¹⁹ on legal aid in Malaysia four key barriers in the provision of legal aid services to the vulnerable non-citizens were highlighted. First, the limited scope of legal aid's coverage. Second, financial constraint. Third, limitation in private lawyers' participation in legal aid schemes; and finally the lack of awareness.

To improve the distribution of justice toward the vulnerable non-citizens in Malaysia, this study²⁰ further suggests five broad policy recommendations as follows;

First, to expand the scope of legal aid services covering pressing transnational issues such as trafficking in persons, as well as to provide legal representation, conducting watching brief and acting as counsel to the vulnerable non-citizens

Second, to widen the eligible groups of beneficiaries including the non-citizens;

Third, to collaborate and partner with NGOs, corporate entities and academic institutions in the implementation of legal education, awareness and empowerment. Such collaboration would also allow the legal aid providers to share knowledge, information and expertise;

Fourth, to review the set criteria for a means test particularly on the monthly income of the applicants in order to reflect the current and reasonable income status of the targeted beneficiaries; and

¹⁷ <https://www.cpg-online.de/2015/03/01/national-legal-aid-foundation-nlaf-yayasan-bantuan-guaman-kebangsaan-ybgk/>

¹⁸ <http://www.jbg.gov.my/index.php/en/>

¹⁹ Andika Ab.Wahab & Aizat Khairi (2020) Right to justice and legal aid barriers to the vulnerable non-citizens in

Malaysia. Malaysian Journal of Society and Space 16 issue 1 (13-23), 2020 pages

²⁰ *ibid*

Fifthly, to diversify source of funding including attracting private and corporate entities to contribute financially to legal aid providers.

SDG 16.5 Corruption & Bribery

The 1 Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), a sovereign wealth fund scandal rocked the nation and in the Post General Elections in May 2018 saw the arrest of the former Prime Minister Dato Seri Najib Tun Razak who was Prime Minister from 2009 and 2018. He was found guilty by the High Court on July 28, 2020 and was sentenced to 12 years for abuse of power, money laundering and breach of trust²¹. The case is now under appeal.

The PH government took a very strong stand on corruption with the charges on very high profile personalities in Malaysian politics pertaining 1MDB, Lembaga Tabung Haji and the Federal Land Development Authority. One of the most significant contributions towards institutional reform and good governance was the establishment of the National Centre for Governance, Integrity and Anti-Corruption (GIACC) at the Prime Minister's Department in June 2018. In addition is the release of the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP). The publication edited by Abu Kassim Mohamed and Anis Yusal Yusoff entitled *Recentring Governance, Integrity & Anti-Corruption in Malaysia*²² published in 2020 which documents the efforts to eradicate corruption and restore good governance and integrity.

However with change of government in early 2020 and with the ranking of Malaysia in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) by six ranks from 51 in 2019 to 57 in 2020 has raised doubts in the commitment of the current government to address corruption effectively.

“Some 71% of Malaysians think that Government corruption is a big problem, with Parliament, the police and Government officials ranked the highest for the perception of corruption among public institutions, said Transparency International – Malaysia. (TI-M)”²³

The Centre to Combat Corruption and Cronyism (C4) pinpoints a number of influencing factors which are at the root causes of the current state of affairs namely “stalled institutional reforms, limited access to information on matters of public interest, the continued abuse of power and corruption by enforcement agencies, and a lack of political will to fight institutional corruption which is embedded in the system”²⁴.

SDG 16.b Non Discriminatory laws & policies

²¹ Najib Razak: Malaysian ex-PM gets 12-year jail term in 1MDB corruption trial (2020)
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-53563065>

²² <https://giacc.jpm.gov.my/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Recentring-Governance-Integrity-AC.pdf>

²³ <https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/71-malaysians-view-government-corruption-big-problem-says-tim>

²⁴ <https://c4center.org/press-statement-malaysia-falls-six-ranks-cpi-mark-corruption-seeping-deeper-nation>

After the 14th General Election and at his first speech at the UN General Assembly Tun Dr Mahathir Muhamad on Sept 28, 2018²⁵ and made a pledge that the new government of Malaysia will ratify all the remaining core UN instruments related to the protection of human rights. In this context there was public discussion on the ratification of ICERD – the International Convention in the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The then Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department YB Senator Waytha Moorthy was confronted in Parliament²⁶ during his turn to answer questions on the Budget 2019 on this matter of ratification and the implications for Malaysia especially with specific to the special position of the Malays and the natives of Sabah and Sarawak which is provided for in Article 153 of the Federal Constitution.

There was a major effort on the part of parliamentarians and sections of the CSO-NGOs who mounted an anti ICERD campaign which included objections articulated by academics and civil society leaders who objected to ICERD ratification. There were the objections mounted in parliament by parliamentarians from certain ethnic and religious based parties. Under such pressure the PH government retracted its decision on Nov 23, 2018.²⁷

Although the Government announced its withdrawal the anti ICERD undertook a people mobilisation of street protest via an anti ICERD rally on Dec 8, 2018 with about 50,000 people²⁸. Malaysia might be the first and only country where such a campaign has taken place globally with a public protest march to object ratification of a UN convention.

Malaysia is among the 12 countries in the UN who have not ratified ICERD as 182 or 94.8% have ratified. Of 57 members of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)²⁹ is among 2 who have not ratified. The remaining 55 have ratified. Malaysia as a nation have a long way to go before non-discriminatory policies based on ethnicity can be abolished using international standards and benchmarks.

SDG 16 Plus - Gender Based Violence (SDG 5.2)

It is noted that there is an increase in gender based violence across countries during the COVID-19 pandemic especially domestic violence (DV) and intimate partner violence (IPV)³⁰. In Malaysia, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development reported³¹ that in 2020 there were more than 1,200 cases of sexual abuse towards women and 2,287 cases of domestic

²⁵ <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2018/09/415941/speech-text-dr-mahathir-73rd-un-general-assembly>

²⁶ Chaos at Dewan Rakyat over Waytha’s speech on ICERD <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2LDRZihOgV4>

²⁷ <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2018/11/23/malaysia-decides-not-to-ratify-icerd/1696399>

²⁸ <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/thousands-gather-for-kl-rally-against-un-rights-convention>

²⁹ Denison Jayasooria (2018) Examining ICERD ratification among OIC members.

<https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/455037>

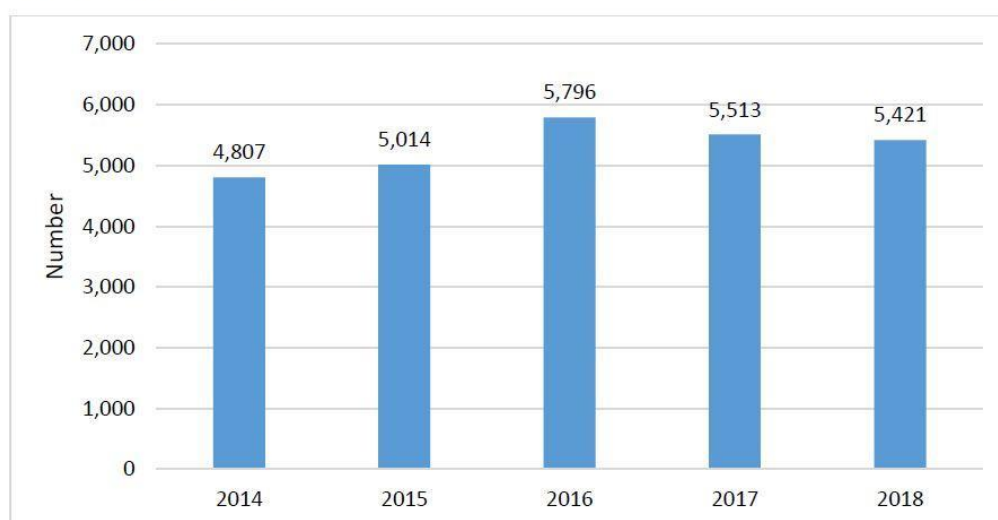
³⁰ <https://www.my.undp.org/content/malaysia/en/home/blog/2020/domestic-violence-amid-covid-19-in-malaysia--diving-deeper-into-.html>

³¹ <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2020/12/10/domestic-violence-got-worse-during-pandemic/>

violence. However the figures presented by the Police and the Women’s Aid Organisation as per the table below indicates a rise from 4,807 cases in 2014 to 5,421 cases in 2018.

A number of recommendations are made by CSOs which include the need to recognising domestic violence support as an essential service; the need to establishing emergency shelters; the need to increase publicity and awareness; support groups for survivors; Skills training and employment assistance for survivors and the need to allocate financial aid to survivors. These were made by the Penang Institute

Figure 1: Number of domestic violence cases reported to the Royal Malaysian Police, Malaysia, 2014-2018



Source: Royal Malaysian Police, as obtained from Women’s Aid Organisation (WAO)

SDG 16 Plus - Early Marriage (SDG 5.3)

On the issue related to child early and forced marriage as found in SDG 5.3, DOSM released the data of non-Muslim women

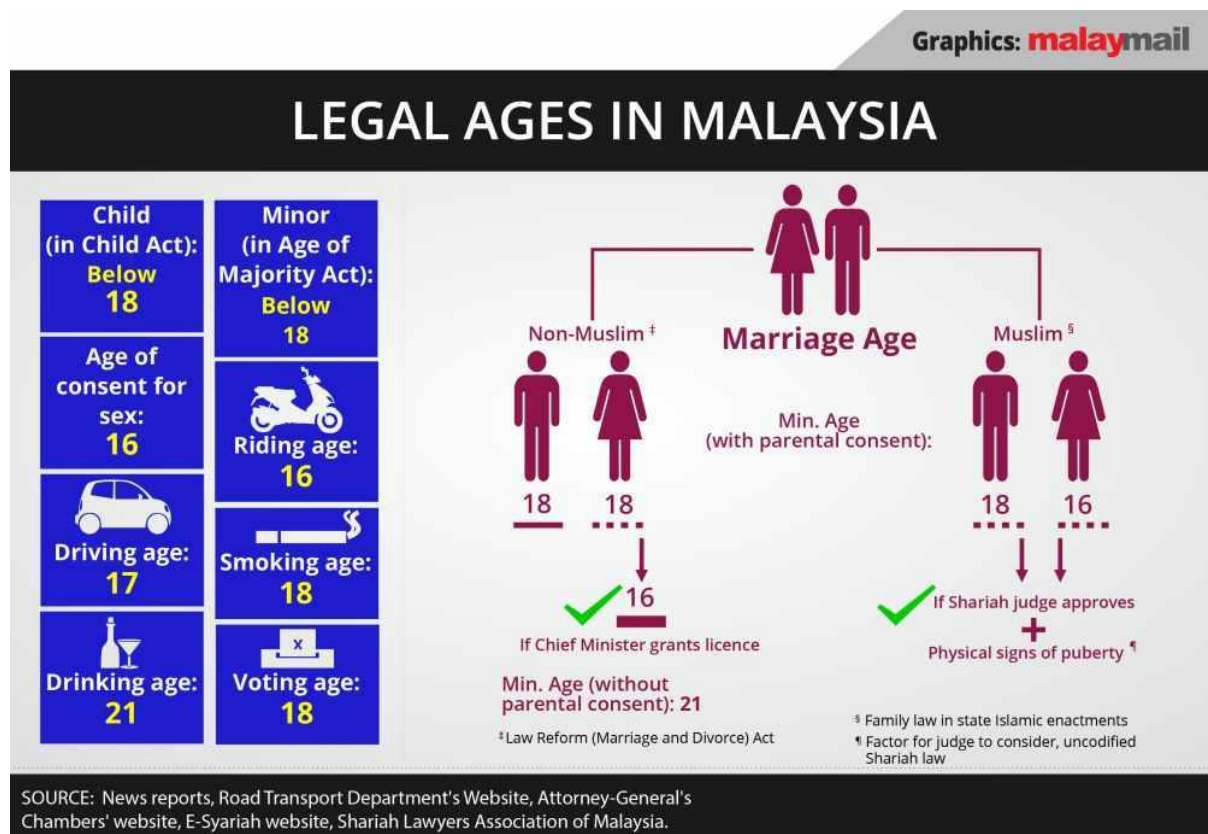
SDG INDICATORS		Year	Value	Year	Value	Trend
5.3.1	Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18	2018	17.0	2019	18.0	Upward trend

Journalist Ms Ida Lim³² provides a helpful table of legal ages in Malaysia for non-Muslim women for marriage is 18 years of age and without parental consent is 21 years of age. An appeal could be made with a chief Minister of the State for special permission if below 18.

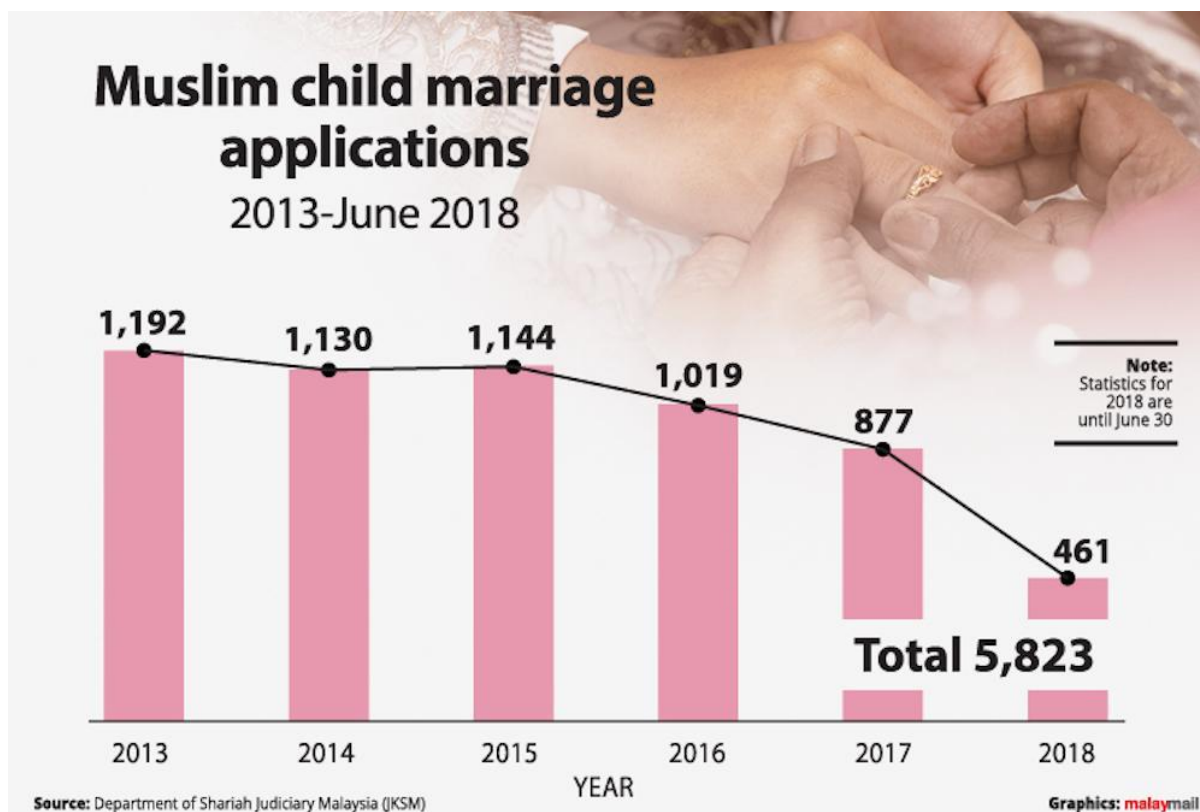
³² <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/12/04/ministry-543-child-marriages-including-applications-in-malaysia-from-jan-se/1928716>

In the case of Muslim women the marriage age is 16 and with the approval of the Shariah judge and with physical signs of puberty approval could be granted for a young age. In that article Ms Ida Lim reveals the data on Muslim child marriage applications between 2013 and 2018 indicating 5, 823 cases.

The Malaysian government has launched a five-year National Strategy Plan in Handling the Causes of Child Marriage in January 2020 however the government has acknowledged that it has some resistance to changing the marriage age. This is recognised that “Malaysia is composed of a multiracial society which has different customs, cultures and religions, therefore talks and engagement sessions with the relevant experts including child experts, culture experts and Shariah experts still have to be conducted to ensure views from all are taken into account in the fixing of the minimum age of marriage at 18 years old, especially in states that have yet to agree.”³³



³³ ibid



SDG 16 Plus –Genital Mutilation (SDG 5.3)

The issue of female circumcision or also known as female genital cutting or female genital mutilation is a very contentious matter in Malaysia. It is estimated that about 90³⁴ per cent of Muslim women in the country have been circumcised. The Malaysia government during the CEDAW Committee’s 2018 review of Malaysia³⁵ claimed the practice is part of a cultural obligation and is harmless as well as does not have an impact on the sexual health of women.

In the concluding observations by the CEDAW Committee it was “stressed that regardless of whether such a procedure was only symbolic or conducted within a medical institution, female circumcision, female genital cutting and female genital mutilation could not be justified on religious grounds and still constituted a ‘harmful practice’.”³⁶

The Federation of Reproductive Health Associations, Malaysia (FRHAM) has proposed that the “Malaysia government, together with health and religious authorities to develop and implement a strategy to end female genital mutilation/ circumcision among women and girls”³⁷.

³⁴ <https://www.malaymail.com/news/what-you-think/2021/02/06/female-genital-mutilation-should-the-practice-be-continued-kama-kenny/1947445>

³⁵ *ibid*

³⁶ *ibid*

³⁷ *ibid*

SDG 16 Plus –Women Participation and leadership (SDG 5.5)

DOSM³⁸ provided this data women in political and managerial post. While there might be some positive change or improvement, nonetheless the percentage of women in leadership post falls below the Malaysian target of at least 30%³⁹. This target has been set by the Malaysian government as a target for women in leadership post in public and private sector positions.

SDG INDICATORS		Year	Value	Year	Value	Trend
5.5.1	Seats held by women in Senate (%)	2018	17	2019	18	Positive change
5.5.1	Seats in House of Representatives (%)	2018	14.4	2019	14.9	Positive change
5.5.1	Women in Cabinet Ministers (%)	2018	17.9	2019	17.9	Unchanged
5.5.1	Women in Cabinet Deputy Minister (%)	2018	14.8	2019	15.4	Positive change
5.5.2	Women in managerial post (%)	2018	24.7	2019	23.3	Negative change

It is however interesting to read the Grant Thornton International Business Report (IBR) which was published in 2020 and which due the conclusion that “Malaysian women today make up 33 per cent of positions in senior management teams within companies in the country”⁴⁰.

“The report also revealed that 90 per cent of businesses in Malaysia have at least one woman in senior management. This is above the global percentage of 87 per cent — a figure which has held steady since last year. The top three senior management positions are human resource directors (52 per cent), chief financial officers (29 per cent) and chief operating officers (28 per cent)”⁴¹.

³⁸ SDG Indicators. Department of Statistics Malaysia 2019. Page 42

³⁹ <https://www.talentcorp.com.my/resources/press-releases/governments-initiatives-to-increase-women-in-the-workforce-make-headway#:~:text=Meanwhile%2C%20Malaysia%20is%20on%20track,top%20management%20positions%20across%20PLCs.>

⁴⁰ [https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/03/06/study-33pc-malaysian-women-hold-senior-leadership-roles-in-country-higher-t/1843809#:~:text=Most%20Read%2C%20Study%3A%2033pc%20Malaysian%20women%20hold%20senior%20leadership%20roles,country%2C%20higher%20than%20global%20average&text=KUALA%20LUMPUR%2C%20March%206%20%E2%80%94%20Malaysia%20Report%20\(IBR\)%20has%20found.](https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/03/06/study-33pc-malaysian-women-hold-senior-leadership-roles-in-country-higher-t/1843809#:~:text=Most%20Read%2C%20Study%3A%2033pc%20Malaysian%20women%20hold%20senior%20leadership%20roles,country%2C%20higher%20than%20global%20average&text=KUALA%20LUMPUR%2C%20March%206%20%E2%80%94%20Malaysia%20Report%20(IBR)%20has%20found.)

⁴¹ ibid

4 SDG 16 PLUS & WHOLE SOCIETY APPROACH

The discussion here focuses on poverty and inequality in Malaysian society with a specific focus on three SDGs namely SDG 1 No poverty; SDG 2 on Zero hunger and SDG 10 on addressing inequality.

SDG 1 No Poverty & Poverty Line Income Measurement

DOSM provided data for two indicators and two more aspects which are relevant.

SDG INDICATORS		Year	Value	Year	Value	Trend
SDG 1.1.1	Households below International poverty line (%)	2016	0.0	2019	0.0	Unchanged
SDG 1.2.1	Households below national poverty line (5)	2016	7.6	2019	5.6	Positive change
	Multi-dimensional Poverty	2016	0.0152	2019	0.0110	Positive change
	No of recipients of assistance(*000)	2018	571.2	2019	561.2	Negative change

A major review of defining poverty and measurement emerged with the visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights from August 13 to 23, 2019⁴². Prof Philip Alston delivered his early report on August 23, 2019 in Kuala Lumpur⁴³. His final report was released in July 6, 2020⁴⁴.

A number of significant points were made by the UN Special Rapporteur but most basic is the Poverty line Income is too low and therefore called for a higher level in line with the development of Malaysia. The PLI was RM980.00 for a family.

The New Economic Planning Unit Minister Dato Mustaphas Muhamad announced that the PN Malaysian government was readjusting the PLI based on the latest 2019 household income figures⁴⁵. He said that “Malaysia revised the PLI to RM2,208 compared with the RM980 rate that has been applied since 2005”⁴⁶.

⁴²

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/Pages/VisitMalaysia.aspx#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Special%20Rapporteur,of%20human%20rights%20in%20Malaysia.>

⁴³ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24912&LangID=E>

⁴⁴ <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/07/06/un-special-rapporteur-slams-new-govt-for-rescinding-commitment-to-improve-p/1881899>

⁴⁵ <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/09/29/tok-pa-national-poverty-line-income-to-be-revised-under-12th-malaysia-plan/1907782>

⁴⁶ *ibid*

However while this readjustment is welcomed, it is noted that the new PLI will not capture adequately the urban poor⁴⁷. This is because based on the median household income released by the Statistics Department which is RM6,561 then the PLI for urban areas should be RM3,280 and RM 2,208.00 would be low. Furthermore it will not capture the reality of deprivation which is far higher in urban contexts. This might not be captured in official data. The call therefore is to review the indicators used to measure the multi-dimensional poverty index or the MPI. There should be a separate indicators for rural and urban.

5 PROTECTING FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Two matters are discussed year pertaining to fundamental freedoms pertaining to enforced disappearance with specific reference to the Special Inquiry report of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM). The second is on detentions without trial and the use of prevention detentions without being produced in the court of law for a fair and open trail.

Enforced Disappearance (SDG 16.10.1)

On April 20, 2017 a coalition of civil society organisations led by Suaram submitted a memorandum to SUHAKAM⁴⁸ on four missing persons namely Joshua Hilmi and Ruth Hilmi (missing since Nov 2016); Amri Che Mat (also missing since Nov 2016) and Pastor Raymond Koh (missing since Feb 2017). The Public Inquiry was held over nine months between Oct 2017 and Dec 2018. The conclusion was “that state-hired agents carried out the enforced disappearances of Amri and Koh”⁴⁹. In the SUHAKAM report it is concluded that it was “carried out by the agents of the State namely the Special Branch, Bukit Aman, Kuala Lumpur”.⁵⁰

SDG 16.10.1 Arbitrary Detentions (Detentions without trial)

“The use of draconian security laws shows no sign of abating even during a pandemic year. All four laws that permit detention without trial, namely, the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (SOSMA), the Prevention of Crime Act 1959 (POCA), the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2015 (POTA) and the Dangerous Drugs (Special Preventive Measures) Act 1985 (DDA) continue to be applied and abused”⁵¹.

⁴⁷ <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2020/09/23/new-poverty-line-still-does-not-reflect-urban-reality-says-expert/>

⁴⁸ Public Inquiry on the disappearance of Pastor Raymond Koh Final Decision (2019) <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qQ9WAQzizsZDGwHsiYM-mFWnlkg2XJPU/view>

⁴⁹ <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2019/04/11/so-what-exactly-are-enforced-disappearances/1741954>

⁵⁰ SUHAKAM (2019) <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qQ9WAQzizsZDGwHsiYM-mFWnlkg2XJPU/view>, page 70

⁵¹ Malaysian Human Rights Report 2020 Review. SURAM (2021) <https://www.suaram.net/2020/12/09/suaram-human-rights-report-overview-2020>. Page 6

<https://www.suaram.net/2020/12/09/suaram-human-rights-report-overview-2020> launch/?__cf_chl_jschl_tk__=8b0189da021151ca91e69c7db78097aae43b582a-1612584885-0-Aa7vdkNXgAboloQgolDWZIEFtUJvQONF_KhgZYlJDXVXrb2BI1t9NphzFD9T6s9Eu7kbDz_gb49co5tTNVv3hon3hu

	Terrorism	Trafficking/ Immigration	Organised crime	Others	Total
SOSMA	13	629	126	2	770
POCA	0	7	116	544	667
POTA	1	0	0	0	1
Total	14	636	242	546	1438

6 EXAMPLE OF SDG 16 PLUS

Five examples from Malaysia are cited in this section which has relevance to SDG 16 such as strengthen the human rights institution; regional cooperation for anti-terrorism; addressing the situation of the undocumented and stateless people residing in Malaysia; the parliamentary reform efforts and challenges and finally the Department of Statistics Malaysia for their positive role in making data accessible as well as the challenges they face in gathering all the required data based on the indicators in the 2030 agenda to measure effective implementation.

6.1 Example 1 Malaysian Human Rights Commission

There is reference to the existence of Independent National human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris principles (SDG 16.a.1) and in Malaysia it is Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)

The Commission was established by an Act of Parliament in 1999 and the first inaugural meeting was held on April 24 2000 under the Chairmanship of Tun Musa Hitam, the former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia. A total of 108 commissioners have been appointed since the founding to undertake the duty since the founding to date.

Over the past 20 years, SUHAKAM undertook many educational, public complaints, press releases, publications and international obligations. However the most significant was the 12 public inquires on various human rights violations such as excessive use of force by the Police during public assemblies, arrest & detention, death in custody and most recently on disappearance. The most significant was the National inquiry into the land rights of the indigenous people. All the inquiries were undertaken professionally in compliance to Malaysian laws, as well as consistent with the UDHR and other UN human rights standards. All the findings including supporting evidences were publically disclosed as well accessible on the SUHAKAM website for all to review.

Between 2000 and 2020, SUHAKAM has issued 19 Annual Reports but since the founding only in 2019 was the 2018 Annual Report debated in Parliament. The 2018 Suhakam report was tabled in Parliament on April 11, 2019 and debated on December 5, 2019. However, the

ae839QGDsyNTYott446eOm8BIbLBKFwqF3LG0hKTF-kvo-Wkm_wR2MUVyACL5kVZ5j_9Y-1k5Dz5h09B2Yc08hF2uDSG6qzpsYqPMctlyD_LHSGaliV_h5CYXU9m7JBDEHx11ZqYgafI_CXHcyxI70v8DdjUIPIW hYedUCR5m67jJvuqXunr4vEAHJ37H5eBQQLoBlDnxep8zXUXSaEVLqi0gWw23brnkrHkDQBA_VUyGCAnOnTYKIQi 2K2NSWm64sRvgKTSchespbUXHN6G4_AQ0sdX84znrFWNFw

⁵² ibid

government in 2020 did not make provision for the 2019 Annual Report to be debated which was viewed with disappointment.⁵³

One of the major challenges facing SUHAKAM which has fulfilled the Paris principles is its recommendation have very little support for the government of the day in terms of compiling to human rights universal standards. In the 2018 Annual Report⁵⁴ the Suhakam Chairman Tan Sri Razali Ismail indicated how the government distanced itself from participation in the 2018 Human Rights Day celebration due to the public backlash by a section of the Malaysian society to the proposed ICERD ratification promise by the government. It might therefore be necessary for the Prime Minister in 2020 to reaffirm the Malaysian government's commitment to human rights by personally participating in human rights day celebration.

The recommendation call by PROHAM⁵⁵, a society for the promotion of human rights is for the SUHAKAM Act to be amended to ensure greater independence from the Executive branch of government. In this context it was noted that the members of the nomination committee be reviewed and this role be undertaken by a parliamentary committee. The tenure of service be reviewed to increase from the current three to five or six as one appointment only with no renewal. Also to strengthen the existing laws to see how to compel agencies to implement the inquiry finding

PROHAM also called for the review of the National Human Rights Action Plan which was launched on March 1, 2018 by the BN government so as to strengthen human rights obligations inconsistency with the Universal declaration of Human Rights & the Federal Constitution. That this task of review be undertaken by SUHAKAM by engaging with all relevant agencies, academic institutions and civil society organisations. It will be good for Malaysia to launch alongside the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030, a human rights action plan 2030 which can set the national roadmap like the SDGs with one which focuses on human rights and Malaysian society.

6.2 Example 2 International cooperation in combating terrorism through the Southeast Asia Research Centre for Counter Terrorism (SEARCT)

There is a SDG reference for international cooperation to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime found in SDG 16.a.

International cooperation in combating terrorism through the Southeast Asia Research Centre for Counter Terrorism (SEARCT)⁵⁶ is established by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysian government on July 1, 2003 as a regional centre for countering terrorism and violent extremism. This fare they have 17 national partners including the Malaysia Royal Police and the Army and 16 foreign partners including the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED).

⁵³ Radzi Razak, Minister: Suhakam report will not be debated in Parliament this year (STAR: 1 Dec 2020) <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2020/12/01/suhakam-disappointed-annual-report-not-debated-in-parliament>

⁵⁴ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fvvmISqXJ2ysTdhRrYnSws6Bwz6FQiaG/view>

⁵⁵ PROHAM Press Release entitled Fostering human rights culture in Malaysia, Towards a 2030 agenda, arising from the Roundtable discussion on "SUHAKAM 20 years" held on Oct 11, 2019

⁵⁶ <https://www.searct.gov.my/>

(SEARCHT) is Malaysia's contribution for capacity building, research, analysis and strategizing for regional and global cooperation in countering Terrorism in the region. Thus far they have undertaken 200 training programs for about 10,000 participants from 95 countries. In addition they have targeted over 8,500 local youths on counter terrorism narrative.

6.3 Example 3 Addressing the issues pertaining to undocumented person in Malaysia.

SDG 16.9 gives attention to the need for legal identity for all. The theme of ending statelessness in Malaysia is well documented⁵⁷. According to UNHCR it is estimated that there are at least 10,000 people in West Malaysia alone who are denied nationality, with unknown numbers in East Malaysia. The implication of this are that these people do not have an opportunity to access public educational and health care facilities as well as cannot seek employment.

One local NGO working on this issue is the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (DHRRA)⁵⁸, which is a voluntary non-profit and non-political organization registered in 2006 under the societies Act of Malaysia 1966. They received technical support from UNHCR⁵⁹. It is said that they have managed to reduce the number of stateless people from an estimated 40,000 persons in 2009, to 12,400 persons by the end of December 2017.

It has also be noted that through a mapping and legal aid project⁶⁰ implemented by UNHCR and DHRRA with technical support from UNHCR, established a figure of 12,400 stateless persons residing in West Malaysia. A total of 12,078 nationality applications have been submitted to the National Registration Department (NRD) by DHRRA's community based paralegals. Of this number, 2,359 persons have acquired nationality. DHRRA and UNHCR will continue to follow up on the progress of the applications. However this work is ongoing and there are many difficulties in finding a long lasting solution to this issue of legal identity.

There is the call to learn lessons from the engagement and advocacy to address statelessness in West Malaysia, which requires "a sufficient level of political will combined with inclusive strategies and sustained support from all stakeholders especially the Government, the main duty bearer to identify and measure stateless".⁶¹

Lawyers for Liberty⁶² in Malaysia have highlighted how a new policy requiring stateless children in Malaysia to produce passports in order to be enrolled in local schools violates the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). They urged "the government to honour its obligations under the CRC by immediately streamlining and clarifying its policy in order to accord equal access to education to stateless children and ensure its compliance in all states.

⁵⁷ UNHCR <https://www.unhcr.org/en-my/ending-statelessness-in-malaysia.html>

⁵⁸ <http://www.dhrramalaysia.org.my/>

⁵⁹ UNHCR op.cit

⁶⁰ UNHCR ibid

⁶¹ Rodziana Mohamed Razali (2017) Addressing Statelessness in Malaysia: New Hope and Remaining Challenges. https://files.institutesi.org/WP2017_09.pdf

⁶² <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2021/02/07/putrajaya-bound-by-global-convention-to-give-stateless-children-education-a/1947690>

We must give stateless children a fighting chance to survive or even thrive and not cause them any further undue hardship”.⁶³

6.4 Example 4 Parliamentary reform & suspension

With the change of government in May 9, 2018 and the fall for the BN after being at the helm for 61 years, the new PH made institutional reform at the top priority. It appointed a special panel of five public personalities with Dato KC Vorah as the chair. This was the Institutional Reforms Committee (IRC)⁶⁴

Their terms of reference called for a review of eight key institutions in Malaysian society namely Parliament, Elections, Judiciary, Law Officers & Legal Service, Anti-Corruption, Police & Immigration, Communications, Media & Information and Human Rights Laws & Institutions. The IRC met up with over 40 different groups which provided input on this reform agenda.

As was mentioned one key institution was parliament and the new speaker of Parliament. The two years (2020) of the 14th Parliament under the Speakership of Tan Sri Mohamad Ariff was a great period for Parliamentary reform⁶⁵

Meredith Weiss⁶⁶ commented that “parliamentary reform, for instance, to introduce select committees, revivify debate, and otherwise improve the legislative process has made some headway, pressed more importantly by the Speaker of the lower house, the Dewan Rakyat, Tan Sri Mohamad Ariff Md. Yusof, than by elected political leadership”.

The 14th Parliament Speaker, Tan Sri Dato Mohamad Ariff Bin Mohd Yusof started a series of Parliamentary reform in 2018 including hosting public forums and discussions and opening up Parliament for the participation of non-parliamentarians in these forums. The vision was to enable the Parliament as an institution to be close to the people and to foster a thinking public.

The speaker established ten special select committees, hosted 37 public events between Sept 2018 and Oct 2019 with the objective of demystifying parliament and recognised the value of public engagement as well as started the Speakers Lecture Series⁶⁷.

With the change of the government in early 2020, a new speaker was appointed, Datuk Azhar Azizan Harun who took office on July 13, 2020⁶⁸ with the promise of continuing the reform however Parliament session has been suspended for six months between Feb and August 2021.

⁶³ ibid

⁶⁴ <https://www.lh-ag.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/People-@-LHAG.pdf>

⁶⁵ <https://liewchintong.com/2020/07/07/two-years-of-parliamentary-reforms-continuing-the-transformation/>

⁶⁶ <https://thediplomat.com/2019/10/meredith-weiss-on-politics-in-a-new-malaysia/>

⁶⁷ Mohamad Ariff Md Yusof, Roosme Hamzah and Shad Saleem Faruqi, Principles and Practice in the Dewan Rakay (House of Representatives), (Thomas Reuters, 2020) pages 475-494

⁶⁸ <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2020/09/17/speaker-wants-to-form-eight-new-special-select-committees>

This suspension of Parliamentary session during the COVID pandemic where greater bipartisan consensus is needed to address not just health issues but also economic recovery, can be seen as a major setback to parliamentary democracy in Malaysia.

6.5 Example Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM)

The Department of Statistics of Malaysia (DOSM) has been playing a major role in creating awareness of SDGs through the collection of data and making it public. So far they have undertaken a comprehensive publication of their data based on the 17 SDG goals, targets and indicators. They released their first report in 2019 for the year 2018 and in 2020 their report for 2019.

While there are gaps, nonetheless they have published 51% or 128 of the indicators out of the 247. DOSM has also indicated if there was a positive change or negative or if the data shows no change therefore being consistent.

DOSM has also hosted dialogues with CSOs to advise us on the data available and has for the 2019 made a specific reference to the APPGM SDG and the Malaysian CSO SDG Alliance

7 ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS & CSOS IN NATIONAL SDGS

7.1 Parliamentarians

A new opportunity arose with the reform agenda of Parliament since 2018 when the Speaker of Parliament began an agenda to “demystify Parliament”⁶⁹ by undertaking a series of public engagement events such as public forums, workshops, parliamentary visits and Speaker’s Lecture series. At one of these seminars on parliamentary reform held on Dec 8, 2018 Mr Stefan Priesner, the UN Resident Coordinator shared his reflections of on the 2030 Agenda.

As a follow up, the Malaysian CSO SDG Alliance hosted a series of conversations with the Speaker and on July 1, 2019 a dinner was hosted as an interaction between Members of Parliament and CSOs on localising SDGs. On Oct 17, 2019, the Parliament session⁷⁰ agreed to the establishment of the All Party Parliamentary Group on SDGs. Since the formation thirteen members of Parliament are involved in the SDG pilot phase in ten parliamentary constituencies with a special grant in 2020 provided by the Ministry of Finance. The Alliance was appointed as the Secretariat.

The constituency role of parliamentarian provide an opportunity for MPs to play a part in localising SDGs as the ultimate SDG goal is to address local issues especially impacting

⁶⁹ Mohamad Ariff Md Yusof, Roosme Hamzah and Shad Saleem Faruqi, Principles and Practice in the Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives), (Thomas Reuters, 2020) 476

⁷⁰ Ibid 481

vulnerable communities at the grassroots. In 2020 the APPGM SDG⁷¹ undertook a pilot program in ten parliamentary constituencies and for 2021 another 20 new constituencies have been added. This localising agenda is funded by a special grant by the Ministry of Finance and supported by the Economic Planning Unit which is the lead agency. This is a bi partisan⁷² approach in localising SDGs.

In addition to the local action, another parliamentary role is the monitoring of SDG policy formulation which is the formulation of development policies and plans, annual budget allocations and through parliamentary question time to Cabinet members on SDG delivery impacting economic, social and environment concerns.

The APPGM SDG Secretariat is also invited to be members of the VNR Steering and Technical Committees. The Secretariat is working with the Malaysian CSO SDG Alliance members to prepare position papers as input to the VNR process. This is part of the multi stakeholder process of parliamentarians, academics and civil society leaders working with the Economic Planning Unit of the Malaysian government and all relevant government agencies and the UN country team in Malaysia.

7.2 CSO & SDGs – the Role of the Malaysian CSO SDG Alliance

CSOs resolved in Oct 2015 after the UN agreed to the 2030 Agenda to establish an Alliance or Network of organisations working on SDG issues drawing together all the interested organisation working on economic, social and environmental concerns.

Fifty organisations are members of the Alliance. Of these, nine are umbrella organisations such as the Malaysian Youth Council (MBM), Malaysian Environmental NGOs (Mengo), National Council of Women Organisations (NCWO), Network of Indigenous People (JOAS), Sarawak SDG Alliance, Penang Forum, UN Global Compact Malaysia, FOMCA- Federation of Malaysian Consumer Associations and finally. MyCommunity4SDG. The remaining forty one are individual organisations focused on a target group or service. The Alliance members address concerns pertaining to gender, human rights, indigenous people, disabled people, children, communities at risk and environmental sustainability concerns

The Alliance undertook a mapping exercise and we identified eight specific roles. First, in awareness raising work on SDGs. Second, in service provision and projects. Third, community development. Fourth, capacity building & training. Fifth, financial services & income generation projects. Sixth, data collection, research and monitoring. Seventh, policy advocacy and finally a watchdog and accountability role.

The Alliance participated in the National SDG Symposium on Feb 29, 2016 and at the SDG Roadmap Conference on Nov 15 & 16, 2020 organised by EPU and the UN. CSO played an active role in the review of the SDG Roadmap for Malaysia (2016-2020). We were given a draft copy and we met up

⁷¹ Close monitoring needed to achieve 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — DOSM (2020) <https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/close-monitoring-needed-achieve-2030-agenda-sustainable-development-%E2%80%94-dosm>

⁷² Denison Jayasooria (2020) A small spark of hope for bipartisan cooperation in SDGs. <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/505817>

with the EPU officials on October 24, 2019. Thirteen members of the Alliance provided feedback and we made a written submission. However the SDG Road map has not been released.

Three members of the Alliance were appointed to the National SDG Steering Committee⁷³ which held its first meeting in December 21, 2016 and a second meeting was held on Oct 15, 2019. We appealed for two more seats so we secured five. These were represented by Malaysian CSO SDG Alliance, Malaysian Environmental NGOs (MENGO), Coalition of Malaysian NGOs (COMANGO), Malaysian Youth Council (MBM) and National Council of Women Organisations (NCWO).

We also met up with EPU officials and provided input for the first Voluntary National Review Report⁷⁴ 2017 which Malaysia presented at the High Level Political Forum at the UN in New York in July 17, 2017. That year six⁷⁵ Malaysians from CSOs were present in New York and three⁷⁶ of us had the opportunity to raise questions at the UN after the Malaysian VNR was presented.

The Malaysian CSO SDG Alliance hosted a side event in New York on July 18, 2017⁷⁷ to review the Malaysian VNR and was participated by EPU representation, UNESCAP speaker and Malaysian CSO. We released a report on CSO reflections in which we noted the current gaps and also highlight the role civil society is playing to complement the government as well as holding the government accountable to the SDG goals, targets and indicators

In 2019, The United Nations Office in Malaysia and the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MEA) hosted a SDG Summit on November 6 & 7, 2019. At this Summit, the Malaysian CSO SDG Alliance hosted a parallel session which was a Civil Society Forum. A 73 page report entitled “Accelerating SDGs in policy and services at the local levels: Civil Society Perspectives”, was prepared for the Summit and submitted to MEA and the UN. It has the input from 20 different CSO leaders on 11 key themes or papers.

The members of the Malaysian CSO SDG Alliance were instrumental in meeting with the Speaker of Parliament in mid-2019 on the setting up of a parliamentary group on SDGs which eventually materialized by Oct 2019 as the All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia (APPGM) on SDGs. and the Alliance became the secretariat. With funding from the Ministry of Finance in 2020 and for 2021, the Alliance is working with 30 members of parliament on the localising of SDGs in Malaysia.

The Alliance has been invited by the Economic Panning Unit of the Prime Minister’s Department to be a member of the VNR Steering & Technical working committees to prepare the VNR which will be presented at the High Level Political Forum in July 2021 as Malaysia has agreed to present its second VNR Report.

⁷³ <http://www.ripess.org/an-example-of-a-national-multi-stakeholder-approach-for-implementing-the-sdgs-including-sse-case-of-malaysia/?lang=en>

⁷⁴ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/15881Malaysia.pdf>

⁷⁵ The five Malaysians were Ms Lavanya Rama Iyer (WWF Malaysia), Ms Chee Yoke Ling (Third World Network), Mr Rizal Rozhan (Empower), Mr Atama Katama (Indigenous People), Mr Alizan Mahadi (ISIS Malaysia) & Denison Jayasooria (Malaysian CSO SDG Alliance & KITA-UKM)

⁷⁶

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d7a8b54f8fcb073d517d297/t/5d8e4f281235c33db83a295a/1569607464379/QUESTIONS%2BON%2BVNR%2BSESSION%2B4%2BON%2BMALAYSIA%2BON%2BJULY%2B17%2B2017.pdf>

⁷⁷ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=20000&nr=3773&menu=2993>

We participated in the first meeting of the Technical committee held on Feb 2, 2021 and the Steering Committee held on Feb 5, 2021. We have been invited to participate in the VNR Kick off workshop on Feb 8, 2021. All these meetings are held online.

The Malaysian CSO SDG Alliance has organised five working groups to collective analysis from the CSOs and submit them as policy papers to the VNR drafting consultants by early March 2021. We have set up five working groups.

THEMEMATIC WORKING GROUPS	SDGS	Facilitators & Rapporteurs
WG 1 Poverty & Nutrition	SDG 1 & 2	Dr Lim (Facilitator) Ms Zoel (Rapporteur)
WG2 COVID 19, Health Recovery	SDG 3	Dr Murali (Facilitator), Ms Eira (Rapporteur)
WG 3 Inclusive economic growth	SDG 8, 10	Datuk Yusof Kassim & Mr Kon Onn Sein (co Facilitators), Dr Sue Ann (Rapporteur)
WG 4 Sustainability & Climate change	SDG 12, 13	Ms Lavanya (Facilitator), Mr Anthony (Rapporteur)
WG 5 Governance, social cohesion & partnership	SDG 16, 17	Dr Zainal (Facilitator), Mr James (Rapporteur)

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1 Towards strengthening the partnership between the stakeholders.

There is a need to review the partnership model where CSOs as permanent members of the planning, delivery and monitoring process. The Malaysian CSO SDG Alliance has been working closely with the Economic Planning Unit since 2015 when the first meeting of SDGs after Sep 2015 was held. Although we are members of the National Steering Committee (NSC) on SDGs and have been in constant touch the participation has been consultative and ad hoc. The NSC has only met twice namely in 2016 and 2019. We are now in a series of consultations and engagements on the preparation of the 2021 VNR.

CSOs are calling for a regular meetings yearly for review and monitoring of SDs at the Federal, State and local levels.

Recommendation 2 Strengthening data collection

We are very appreciative of the transparency and close working relationship with DOSM. However out of the 247 indicators they have only 51% or 128 indicators. DOSM has also disaggregated them to the district well which is very good for agencies. However this is not comprehensive enough and therefore we need to secure the remaining data.

We also need to undertake a narrative or interpretative writing of what is working and what is not noting the achievements, challenges and opportunities. Currently DOSM in addition to the data provided does indicated the trend such as positive change, negative or unchanged.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen the cross cutting nature of SDGs in delivery of services as well in monitoring & evaluation

While there is a very strong call for the cross cutting nature of SDGs however for a majority of agencies the delivery is still very silo in focus due to the mandates of each agencies. Therefore there needs to be multi stakeholder teams at the local level which is also multi-disciplinary in nature.

In this context there is a need to foster the intuitional mechanisms for the greater appreciation of the cross cutting nature such as gender mainstreaming, climate change, poverty and inequality agenda from a very strong human rights perspective of leaving no one behind.