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General Debate on Review and Appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development and its Contribution to the Follow-up and Review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

(Excerpts from Malaysia Presentation at 52nd Session of the Commission on Population and Development, 1-5 April 2019, New York)

POPULATION AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

The population of Malaysia is estimated at 33 million today, with 3.1 million are non-citizens. The rate of population growth has declined to 1.7 percent per annum from about 2.5 percent during the 1970-2000 period. This has resulted a decline in crude rate of natural increase from 21 per thousand population in 2000 to 10.6 in 2018.

Today, the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has dipped well below replacement level to 1.9 children per women in 2017 as compared to about 3 children in 2000. The adolescent birth rate in Malaysia has fallen from 19 per thousand girls aged 15-19 years in 1990 to about 10 today. Nevertheless, adolescent pregnancy remains a concern.

Contraceptive prevalence rate increased from about 49 percent in 2004 to 52.2 percent in 2014. Unmet need for modern contraception remains at a very high level, at almost 35 percent. Efforts are being made to reduce unmet need for contraception, with emphasis on the use of modern methods, especially long-acting methods.

The Ministry of Health and other implementing agencies has provide a comprehensive health care services including contraceptive and sexual

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reproductive health. The adoption of the National Adolescent Health Plan of Action (2006-2020) and the establishment of the youth friendly centres known as kafeTEEN by the National Population and Family Development Board (NPFDB) are meant to widen the accessibility of reproductive health education, information, and services for young people.

In addition, the National Reproductive Health Education and Social Education (PEKERTI) Policy and Action Plan was adopted in 2009 as part of the strategies to inculcate a healthy lifestyle and promote the well-being of the population, in line with Goal 3 of the SDGs. Strategies have also been formulated based on the four main aspects of advocacy, human capital, research and development, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

LIFE EXPECTANCY AND MORTALITY

Between 1970 and 2010, life expectancy in Malaysia rose by 10.7 years to 72.7 years for males and 11 years to 77.6 years for females. The advancement in life expectancy is reflected by the decline in age-specific mortality rates. Malaysia's levels of under-five mortality, infant mortality and neonatal mortality are successfully much lower than the ICPD-PoA and SDGs targets.

The infant mortality rate has declined from 39.4 per thousand births in 1970 to 6.7 in 2016. Concomitantly, the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) has declined from 44 per 100,000 births in 1991 to 26.1 in 2010, but rose to 29.1 in 2016. This rise in MMR has caused a great deal of concern, although it is likely that such an increase is due to improvement in registration, especially among the undocumented migrants.

POPULATION AGEING

Malaysia is moving towards becoming one of the aged countries by 2030. Statistics shows that population aged 60 years and above stood at 7.9 percent in 2010 and projected to reach 15.3 percent by 2030. The fast pace of ageing population is as a result of longer life expectancy and rapid decline in TFR.

The National Policy for Older Persons and its Plan of Action were reviewed in 2011 to acknowledge the older persons as citizens with varied

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background and experiences, to have the rights to enjoy a comfortable and respected life and contribute to the development of the nation. This policy is the government's commitment to create a conducive environment for older persons who are independent, with dignity, high sense of self-worth and respected by optimizing their self-potential through a healthy, positive, active and productive ageing.

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

The Ministry of Economic Affairs serves as the focal point for SDG implementation while the Department of Statistics is the database weeper for SDG indicators. Efforts to strengthen population and development data systems, especially locally and gender disaggregated data will continued to be prioritized, so that progress towards ICPD and SDG goals and targets can be monitored closely.

Malaysia supports the principle that all the people of the world, regardless of race, culture and religious beliefs, should enjoy the benefits and fruits of development throughout the entire span of their life. To this end, the Government of Malaysia will continue to work towards creating consensus and policy prescriptions to move forward the ICPD-PoA and SDG target by ensuring that we leave no one behind.



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