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Population and sustainable development, in particular sustained and inclusive economic growth

(Excerpts from Malaysia Country Statement at the 55th Session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development, 25-29 April 2022, New York)

In 2020, Malaysia's population was at 32.4 million, growing at an average annual rate of 1.7 per cent for the period from 2010 to 2020. Driven by a decline in fertility rate accompanied by a sustained rise in life expectancy, Malaysia will become an aged nation by 2030. Cognisant of this, new policies and programmes are being introduced and implemented by the Government.

The National Policy for Older Persons and the National Health Policy for Older Persons have been incorporated into the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 and the 12th Malaysian Development Plan. These policies adopt a multi-stakeholder approach in tackling the impact of fertility decline and population ageing. This include looking at enabling older persons to live independently and continuing their active participation in the society including in economic activities.

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Malaysia's socio-economic development has been significant in transforming our economy from a low income to an upper-middle-income status. Malaysia have achieved significant progress in eradicating poverty and narrowing inequalities. However, the COVID-19 crisis has resulted in vulnerable households falling into poverty and hardship. In response, the Government has deployed several economic stimulus and assistance packages to assist households and businesses, totalling USD125 billion or 36 per cent of the GDP. There has also been an expansion in social protection programmes targeting specific vulnerable groups. Such stimulus packages and social protection programmes would allow progress to be made in eradicating poverty and narrowing inequalities.

“Malaysia is still leveraging the demographic bonus whereby the percentage of the working age population has increased to almost 70 percent in 2020”

Currently, Malaysia is still leveraging the demographic bonus whereby the percentage of the working age population has increased to almost 70 per cent in 2020. The Government also continues to encourage greater female participation in the labour force. Both the increase in percentage of the working age population and the greater female labour force are seen as catalysts, that is expected to positively contribute towards Malaysia achieving high-income nation status within the next decade.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted Malaysia's population and development trajectory, with negative consequences on the nation's social and economic conditions. The pandemic however, has also provided a window of opportunity. In revealing the fragility of some of the policies and structures, it has allowed the country to build back better in a more robust, inclusive and sustainable way, in line with the ICPD-PoA and Sustainable Development Agenda. With the resumption of the important work of the CPD, in close collaborations with various stakeholders, the global community would be back on track to achieving the SDGs in a sustained and inclusive manner.



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