SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS & MALAYSIA SOCIETY: CIVIL SOCIETY PERSPECTIVES

Edited by
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Siri Kertas Kajian Etnik UKM
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Table of Contents

Introduction

Sustainable Development Goals and Malaysia Society: Civil Society Perspectives documents the views of civil society leaders on the future path of the development agenda that Malaysia should adopt and implement – towards 2030.

The call here is for balanced development to ensure "no one will be left behind". It is based on a holistic development paradigm which provides equal focus on people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. Therefore socio-economic development, human rights and environment are all essential dimensions of sustainable development.

This booklet is divided into two parts containing some reflections from the editor in part 1, and in part 2, reflections of civil society leaders based on the first discussion hosted in October 2016.

I have included a collective statement by CSOs on the SDGs. This reflects our concerns and recommendations including four detailed recommendations for implementation.

I take this opportunity to thank all the civil society leaders for their input and reflections. I also thank KITA-UKM for publishing this report and also to Augustine Chay for taking time to review the video recordings and provide a comprehensive summary of the civil society discussions contained in part 2.

Denison Jayasooria
Feb 20, 2016

Civil Society in Malaysia and Reflections on SDG

Following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the global development agenda at the 70th session of the UN General Assembly, more than 20 civil society organisations (CSOs) in Malaysia met on three occasions since October 2015 to reflect on the relevance of SDGs to the country.

We recognise that under the principle of leaving no one behind, the SDGs integrate human rights and development in a balanced, inclusive and sustainable way.

We note that the 11th Malaysia Plan (2016-2020) and the SDGs share some common policy and program focus. With that, the 17 goals, 169 targets and the many indicators identified will give a clear direction for both policy and delivery in Malaysia's development program.

We recognise the gaps and shortcomings in the Government's development planning, priorities and implementation. However, many of these gaps could be addressed through the SDGs over the next 15 years between 2016 -2030.

We call upon the Government of Malaysia to ensure the effective implementation of goals, targets and indicators of the SDGs as pledged during the UN Sustainable Development Goals Summit, September 2015 in United Nations, New York.

We stand ready and willing to contribute towards the monitoring and implementation of the SDGs. We call for comprehensive participation throughout the process

in the spirit demonstrated in the outcome document that made a commitment for "all stakeholders acting in collaborative partnership to implement the plan". We believe the SDGs is a critical and timely opportunity to initiate a goals-based partnership that can drive a concerted effort towards achieving Malaysia's own development goals as a shared responsibility.

The concerns and recommendations of the CSOs are as follows:-

First, we hope that the Government will engage CSOs at the planning, delivery, implementation, monitoring and evaluation process of the SDGs. Due to the cross-cutting nature of the sustainable development agenda, formal channels and mechanism should be established at the Federal, State and local – authority and district levels.

Second, we call for the need for a strong institutional framework to support SDGs implementation over the next 15 years. The SDGs must go beyond a reporting framework with clear coordinating and implementation responsibilities. We also highlight the need for an organisational and institutional mapping exercise so as to ensure effective collaborations and coordination across the sectors, disciplines and locations.

Third, there is a need to establish a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure inclusive development across the various dimensions so as to ensure no one is left behind. This should include transparent and wide dissemination of information and data.

Fourth, there is a need to create wider awareness and understanding on the SDGs not only with the stakeholders, but also with the general public. The concept of sustainable development needs to be mainstreamed across government as well as the general public.

Recommendations for SDGs Implementation

1. CSO Engagement:
   - Engagement of relevant CSOs throughout the policy cycle from agenda setting through to implementation;
   - Formation of working groups with representatives from government, private sector, civil society, academicians and professional bodies based on all clusters, goals and targets;
   - Engagement with CSOs at the relevant levels including federal, state and local as the SDGs will require collaboration and competencies at all levels; and
   - Engagement of youth organisations as SDGs is a long term agenda.

2. Strong Institutional Framework for SDGs:
   - Undertake a mapping of organisations and competencies available relevant to the SDGs' Goals and Targets at all levels;
   - Propose that an institutional framework for sustainable development to be established to oversee implementation and nationalise the SDGs beyond global reporting;
   - Explore the possibility of the establishment of a National SDG Council with the EPU Minister

chairing and including representatives from government, private sector, professional bodies and civil society as members. In addition, the Government must establish a strong and well-resourced secretariat which must be inter-agency, inter-disciplinary (including social, economic and environmental experts) and include staff from academia, think tanks and civil society;

- Consider alternative institutional approaches such as the suggestion that EPU change its name to Sustainable Development Planning Unit (SDPU) as economic planning is only one aspect of the planning focus. Another suggestion is to appoint a Sustainable Development Commissioner; and

- Explore financing mechanisms such as a special SDG Fund to finance the implementation of the SDG goals and targets.

3. Comprehensive monitoring and evaluation mechanism:
   - Ensure inclusive development across the various dimensions such as gender, ethnicity and sub-ethnicity, location, class (T20, M40 & B40) is taking place. This is in line with the requirement for disaggregated data which requires data collection and publishing to monitor the progress across many dimensions;
   - To ensure that 'no one is left behind', the SDGs must be inclusive and account for marginalised communities including indigenous peoples with the need to undertake assessments 'on the ground';

- The monitoring and evaluation must include all goals and targets including social, economic and environmental dimensions of the SDGs; and
- Improve access to information through providing public access to data and information on SDGs monitoring and evaluation.

4. Raising awareness and understanding:
   - A commitment to popularise SDGs by creating greater awareness among all the stakeholders with government, private sector, civil society and grassroots communities; and
   - Improve coherence and understanding across the fivefold SDG framework of people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership including the commitment towards sustainable development namely economic, social and environmental including human rights in a balanced way.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Goal 1   End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2   End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3   Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4   Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5   Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6   Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7   Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8   Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9   Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 10   Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11   Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12   Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13   Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
Goal 15	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
Goal 16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
Goal 17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Reference

UN 70/1 Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015.
http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

PART 1 SDG: POTENTIAL & CHALLENGES

Reflections by Denison Jayasooria

The global community at the United Nations on September 25, 2015 agreed to the 2030 Global Agenda entitled "*Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*". This action plan which replaces the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), is universal in nature and comprehensive in the range of issues and concerns addressed pertaining to development, economy, human rights and the environment. The theme of "no one will be left behind" is most critical so as to ensure that inclusive development is within the reach of all people, groups and communities. The SDGs were formulated through an extension participatory process - the collective journey from high level panels to open working groups with lots of consultations and finally a draft negotiated document agreed upon by the State players.

The post Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) review process began at Rio plus 20 (June 2012), where the document '*The Future We Want*' was released. After this the United Nations (UN) established a high level panel in July 2012, to advise the world leaders on the global development framework beyond 2015, the target date for the SDGs. They produced a report entitled '*A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development*'. This was followed by an open working group for SDG, which was established on July 2013. This global participatory process produced a report on Proposals for SDGs by July 2014.

By December 2014, the UN Secretary General released his Synthesis Report '*The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet*'. By August 3, 2015, a draft SDG Agenda document entitled '*Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*' was circulated after a lengthy global discussion among all the stakeholders. The UN General Assembly finally adopted the resolution 70/1 entitled '*Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*' on Sept 25, 2015.

There was a strong collective process and civil society was part of this formulation process although the dominant players were the member states. All these documents were freely accessible on the UN website and therefore this formulation process was inclusive and transparent.

The 2030 SDG Agenda has five areas of critical importance, which can be referred to as the five Ps. These are people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships.

The first P, PEOPLE, is the heart of development to promote human dignity, wellbeing of all, combat inequalities, end poverty & gender equality.

The second P, PLANET, champions combating climate change, promoting sustainable use of earth's resources and sustainable patterns of consumption and production.

The third P, PROSPERITY, specifically focuses on inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

The fourth P, PEACE, promotes life free from fear, coercion & violence, access to justice & human rights for all, and the

Final P, PARTNERSHIP, calls for global solidarity & people–centred approach to development.

The 2030 Global Transformation Agenda has 17 goals and 169 specific targets. It is noted that the SDGs will provide a more comprehensive framework in addressing the concerns of the Bottom 40% (B40) of the socio-economic divide, ensuring not just equal access but also outcomes. The SDGs build on a strong commitment to people-centred development, human rights and environmental sustainability. The agenda focuses on human rights and environment and not just on development concerns.

This is a global agenda for the next 15 years – 2016 to 2030. Each nation state or country has the primary responsibility for financial resources mobilisation and capacity building. There will be a global financing for development agenda. In addition, there will be new partnership between the private sector and civil society in this sustainable development agenda.

Malaysia endorsed this 2030 global action plan and at New York, the Malaysian Prime Minister has made an open pledge for its effective implementation in Malaysia and its role in the global and regional arena. Prime Minister Najib Tun Abdul Razak (2015) said in New York:

"*Malaysia is absolutely committed to the post 2015 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and our*

aspirations to transforming the world by 2030. For inclusivity and sustainable development have long been at the heart of our transformation from a developing country to one that is on course to become a high income society by 2020"

"to reaffirm Malaysia's commitment to support & implement the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, a better future for all is not just within our grasp but it is also our duty to fight for it and I urge all present to join us in this noble and necessary endeavour"

The Malaysian Government is therefore committed to SDGs over the next 15 years although there has not been any roadmap on priorities and implementation strategies. For the first five years, the indicators will no doubt be those as earlier released on May 21, 2015 in Parliament based on the Eleventh Malaysia Plan.

Malaysia did very well in fulfilling the MDGs but there were also some gaps in addressing urban poverty and inequality, concerns pertaining to quality of education and achievements as well as some emerging health issues which should be addressed in the SDGs.

In this context, the SDG Agenda 2030 with the 17 goals and the 169 targets is better poised to address the next level of development concerns. These 17 goals must be taken as a whole and the underlining philosophy and ethos of the SDGs must be upheld. A selective reading and compliance to some of the goals and targets will be ineffective.

Therefore the three dimensions of sustainable development must be taken together, namely, economic, social and environmental in the context of human rights and inclusive development. The five key areas are critically important - people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. In addition, for Malaysia, the guiding principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Declaration on the Right to Development are formative to the realisation of a just society. Combating inequality and creating sustainable and inclusive societies are at the heart of the global transformation. The theme of "no one will be left behind" (UN 2015 page 3) is our collective journey.

Amartya Sen in his book, *Development as Freedom* (1999), clearly articulates a theory for development which breaks the narrow view of development measured by growth of gross national product or with the rise of personal incomes. Prof. Sen states "development process in inclusive terms that integrate economic, social and political considerations" (Sen 1999: 8).

Earlier in the book, he notes that:

"what people can positively achieve is influenced by economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers, and the enabling conditions of good health, basic education, and the encouragement and cultivation of initiatives. The institutional arrangements for these opportunities are also influenced by the exercise of people's freedoms, through the liberty to participate in social choice and in the making of public

decisions that impel the progress of these opportunities" (Sen 1999: 5)

Therefore, in Malaysia, the SDGs' must not just be viewed in a narrow or selective way but in a holistic and inclusive way which empowers the people to realise their full potential through exercising of their economic, social and cultural rights, as well as their civil and political rights. This approach is both an opportunity for Malaysia but at the same time a challenge as we have in the past placed more emphasis on economic and income growth by suppressing personal liberties and environment sustainability.

(Extracts taken from a journal article entitled "Sustainable Development Goals & Social Work: Opportunities & Challenges for Social Work Practice in Malaysia" to be published in *Journal of Human Rights & Social Work* - March, 2016).

PART II SDGs – CIVIL SOCIETY REFLECTIONS

The SDG discussion held on October 27, 2015 drew a core group of civil society actors who shared their views and concerns. While we explored the theme of how SDGs could be the framework for conflict resolution and mediation, much of our discussion centred on enhancing inclusive development, which was both people-centric and empowering.

Datuk Yogees of EPU started the discussion. This was followed by reflections from ten civil society speakers addressing the theme of SDGs. Listed below is a brief summary of their thoughts which are highlighted in this section:

Datuk K. Yogeesvaran (EPU, JPM) in his opening speech, reiterated the Federal Government's commitment to work with civil society in meeting the SDG goals and targets. He appreciated the effort taken by civil society to host the discussion and promised the regular engagement on SDG compliance over the coming years. He affirmed that many of the SDG goals and targets are already incorporated into the 11th Malaysia Plan. He confirmed that the Government viewed seriously the SDGs as important development benchmarks.

SDG & Human Rights: Dato' Aishah Bidin (SUHAKAM):

Dato' Aishah began by noting that the SDGs are inextricably linked to human rights through the following goals: goals concerning economic, social and cultural rights; goals concerning civil and political rights; goals that emphasise the principle of equality, non-discrimination and access for all.

She argued that the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) had to actively ensure that human rights principles were adhered to during the development process. The NHRIs could play an important role in assisting various state governments in adapting the SDGs to national-level policy implementations. The NHRIs could also monitor the government's implementation of the SDG, and thus ensure compliance with international human rights standards.

She also emphasised the importance of providing "more disaggregated statistics and analysis to account for the most vulnerable and marginalised populations

and enhance measurement of discrimination and inequalities both within and among counties".

SDG, Sustainability & Environment: Mr Alizan Mahandi (ISIS):
Mr Alizan noted that the environment plays a key role in the concept of sustainable development, and focused his discussion on how a rights-based approach to environment and sustainability is linked to the SDG framework.

He observed that the concept of sustainable development came from a needs-based approach, with the aim of meeting the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This had evolved into a rights-based approach in recent years, incorporating the ideas of the rights to life, rights of Mother Nature, right to information, and the rights to a clean and healthy environment.

He noted that the environment had been linked to the basic right to life since 1972, but he also noted that there was no constitutional provision for environmental protection in the Malaysian Constitution (or any mention of 'the environment' in the Constitution). The courts have ruled for and against the need for environmental protection, leading their position on the importance of environmental integrity "open to interpretation".

As for the right to a clean and healthy environment, Mr Alizan noted that there were efforts to incorporate this into the Constitution, which had so far been unsuccessful. He brought up the examples of the haze

and the plight of the indigenous people (the Jakun tribe of Tasik Chini), noting that these situations have typically been dealt with as a violation of other rights.

As for the right to information, he noted that provisions for environmental conservation were included in land planning, the Town and Country Planning Act, and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) order. He noted that the EIA had been criticised for failing to reach certain target communities, and for being largely inaccessible to the layperson. He argued that a key issue with sustainable development was the difficulty in articulating a link between the environment and human well-being, with the general public facing a lack of understanding of the impact of the environment on their health, thus making it difficult for them to make informed decisions.

He then moved on to the core concept of sustainable development: intergenerational rights, or the rights of future generations. He noted that it was "very difficult" to assign rights to people who do not exist, while citing the example of Wales' Future Generations Act, and their decision to elect a Future Generations Commissioner to monitor progress in ensuring that the rights of future generations are protected.

As for the rights of 'Mother Nature' herself, Mr Alizan noted that Bolivia has recognized Mother Nature as having a legal standing which could be pursued by human representatives.

He concluded that the rights to life (access to natural resources, water, energy, etc.), the rights to a healthy and clean environment and the rights to information

were well-defined in the SDG, but the rights of mother nature was not represented within the SDG framework.

Finally, he noted that it was very critical to discern the interconnectedness between the environmental targets of the SDG and other goals (health, food, cities, poverty, etc.) and the principle of 'leaving no one behind', which required the desegregation of data from a purely national level to better express the needs of "the indigenous and voiceless communities".

SDG & Conflict Resolution: Mr Asrul Daniel (GMM):

Mr Asrul presented the argument that poverty eradication and sustainable development could not be achieved without addressing conflict, instability and violence. He pointed out several specific instances within the SDG that focused on the elimination of violence in general, as well as against women (physical abuse, genital mutilation) and children (abuse, exploitation).

He also observed the link between violence and the inability to meet MDG (Millennium Development Goals), pointing out the high incidences of violence in countries like DRC, Haiti, Somalia, Kosovo, Papua New Guinea, who are all allegedly unable to meet the MDG.

He also noted that the SDG included "interesting language", such as "building peaceful, just and inclusive societies", arguing that the SDG included a human rights perspective that also included the 'right to development'. He also argued that the issue of violence and insecurity was a universal issue, one that affected both developed and developing countries, and

noted that peace and security were increasingly being seen as developmental goals. This was reflected in the UN My World survey, where seven million respondents placed 'protection from crime and violence' and 'an honest and responsive government' as a top-6 priority.

He noted that the factors associated with violence, insecurity and injustice – inequality, corruption poor governance, and illicit financial and arms flow – were sensitive issues for some nations. He pointed out that some nations had objected to these issues being included in the SDG.

Mr Asrul also pointed out that there was some concern about the "increasing securitisation of the developmental agenda", and argued that one way to safeguard the development agenda was to prioritise human security, as opposed to national security.

He also argued that peace and development was a two-way relationship; one could not be achieved while ignoring the other.

He then moved on to the importance of fully involving women in peace and state building. He pointed out that women's participation in all levels were critical in ensuring peacebuilding, peacekeeping and peace-making. He also noted that a common thread of many extremist movements involved the denial of women's rights, and supporting women in peacebuilding efforts is critical in ensuring that extremist ideologies were curtailed.

He then noted that the SDG also believed that all civilisations and cultures had something to contribute,

and had pledged to foster "intercultural understanding, tolerance, mutual respect, and global citizenship". Elements of this pledge are similar to the Langkawi Declaration of April 2015, which similarly highlighted the importance of moderation, intercultural understanding, tolerance and mutual respect.

Finally, he noted Goal 16 of the SDG, which noted the importance of building a "peaceful and sustainable society" and included items like violence reduction, good governance, promotion of rule of law, reduced arms use, reduced corruption and bribery, legal identity for all, public access to information, the strengthening of relevant public institutions. He concluded that clearer definitions of some of the SDG terms could be included, as well as a better identification of the risk factors that lead to the rise of violence, and the development of measurements for these risk factors and metrics, as a well as effective monitoring processes.

SDG & Gender: Ms Ivy Josiah (PROHAM):
Ms Ivy began by thanking Dato' Aishah for flagging Goal 16, which emphasised the rule of law and the eradication of corruption. She then noted that over 200 NGOs in the Asia-Pacific Region had come together to establish an alternative 'development justice framework'.

To illustrate the importance of looking at economic development in a new way, she pointed out that 1% of the global military budget could ensure that each girl across the world could go to school, and that one of the richest people in the world earns more, in one second,

than what a Bangladeshi garment worker earns in a year.

This development justice framework emphasised five goals: redistributing justice; social justice; accountability to peoples; economic justice; environment justice. She then argued that Goal 5 of the SDG (gender equality) "crosses all the different goals", and gave the example of the issues of divorce and inheritance that was brought up by a grassroots women's meeting in Johor Bahru she recently attended.

She pointed out that gender activism was often seen as being 'extreme' and 'radical', since their goals involved the questioning of gender roles, and the need to 're-educate' men and women. She pointed out that Goal 5 involved the elimination of discrimination and ensuring a legislative framework, and observed that there was a legislative framework in place in the Malaysian context. However, she argued that there was a "Jekyll and Hyde" personality in terms of ratifying international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women CEDAW), where promises were made on international platforms without actually following through on them. She pointed out that the strong accountability framework within the SDGs could be used alongside the recommendations of international treaties like CEDAW.

She also noted the importance of access to resources in Goal 1 and Goal 5, and pointed out that the problem of inheritance kept flagging up when women's issues are concerned (especially with Muslim women). She then pointed out the importance of shared household work,

emphasising the need to ensure a shift in mind-set to make the workplace more gender-equitable.

She concluded that the goals with relation to gender equality in the SDG are clear, and the indicators were very broad - but these needed to fit into the national framework. She observed that the ASEAN region typically used an argument of cultural essentialism (i.e. 'this is our culture') to justify a lack of progress in terms of gender equality. She argued that a government should "remove stereotyping, cultural values, behaviour, mind-sets, including laws and policies that hold back women", instead of saying "that's our culture". She argued that people were still uncomfortable when traditional gender roles were challenged, and concluded that existing monitoring processes could be more productive in an environment that supported freedom of expression, freedom of information, and freedom to dissent.

SDG & Access to Justice: Mr Andrew Khoo (Bar Council):
Mr Khoo began by expressing his disappointment at the lack of any specific mention of human rights within the SDG, but noted that there was an implicit human rights-based approach "undergirded within the document", with emphasis placed on the protection of economic, social and cultural rights.

However, he was critical of the concept of 'soft rights' and 'soft language' within the SDG, since there was no explicit standards or goals being set, with targets like the abolition of poverty or the achievement of gender equality being qualified as being 'as nationally appropriate', or according to the 'ability' of each

country. Given this, countries which are inclined to continue current practices can easily find leeway within the SDG framework to continue doing so.

He also noted that Malaysia has not ratified the convention against torture, thus leaving open the question of how it can comply with Goal 16, which addresses the importance of access to justice.

He observed that corruption was often discussed in a clinical sense, without mention of the human costs of corruption, since it entails a deprivation of resources that could have been directed to human development goals.

He also noted that there was an erosion of public institutions in recent times, with a trust deficit in the ability of public institutions to act as a proper check and balance.

Mr Khoo then moved on to focus on regional concerns, with special mention about the "onset of the ASEAN economic community". He questioned if there was going to be a common, minimum standard for all members to adopt, or if there were going to be exceptions, granted on the basis of national specificities.

As for Malaysia, he noted that Malaysia is still in the process of drafting a National Human Rights Action Plan, and raised the question of whether this plan would be influenced by the SDGs.

Youth & SDGs: Mr Stephen Dass (Yayasan Budi Penyayang):

Mr Dass noted that young people would generally have many concerns about top-down policies. He observed that the government was accountable to its own citizens (and not global governance) when it came to complying with the SDGs. He also noted that the SDGs had been criticised for being 'too broad'; United Kingdom Prime Minister David Cameron had expressed concerns that "there were too many goals to communicate effectively" and argued that it would be more productive to direct resources to a few cost-efficient targets.

He noted that there was a widespread 'trust deficit' towards the governments of various countries, and that 41% of the working population in Malaysia were between the ages of 25-50, and thus would be affected by any development policies.

He argued that youths would want to have a say in how these goals are implemented, monitored and evaluated; a framework that included them, with special provisions for youth leadership and citizenship partnership; a clear leadership role; a mechanism that allowed for remedies when necessary; the usage of citizen-generated data (as opposed to government statistics).

He observed that the Malaysian Youth Council, a local youth platform, was not an open platform where youths could openly voice their views and opinions (especially when contradictory to government positions). He argued that open platforms for youth

participation was necessary for active and vibrant youth participation.

He concluded with the observation that Malaysia was relatively progressive in terms of establishing an explicit youth policy, since many of its ASEAN peers have yet to do so.

SDG & Solidarity Economy: Dr Jun-E Tan (ASEC):
Dr Jun noted that the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) encompasses NGOs, cooperatives, microfinance, social enterprises, social businesses, community-based organisations, etc., and basically operated on the principles of cooperation, solidarity, ethics and democratic management.

Dr Jun noted that the SSE aimed to overcome certain development constraints via mechanisms like income pooling; a community approach to local development; investment of surplus profits in education and healthcare; development of solidarity finance and insurance systems; a focus on democratic culture; prioritisation of people's welfare and environmental conservation over profits.

She noted that the SSE was very compatible with the SDG framework, since it worked within similar constraints and emphasised on collective action and community empowerment. The SSE values also challenged the 'business-as-usual' approach, which was a major obstacle for the achievement of the SDGs. She pointed out that the SSE could work in tandem with the SDGs on the following areas: transitioning away from the informal economy; greening the economy and society; local economic development; sustainable cities

and human settlements; well-being and empowerment; food security; universal health coverage; and transformative finance.

She then noted the debate between Northern and Southern countries over the means of implementation (MOI) of the SDGs. One of the key documents concerned is the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), which has been heavily criticised by civil society organisations in developing countries - thus highlighting the conflict of interest between developed and developing nations over the MOI.

Dr Jun then observed that there were many elements in the 11th Malaysia Plan that were related to the SSE, which included "social financing and whole-society approach in design and delivery of social services". She also highlighted six points that detailed how the 11th Malaysia Plan aimed to regulate the sector: encouraging horizontal and vertical integration via cooperative models; providing funding and financing structures; physical infrastructure and land for SSE activities; streamlining and improving governmental service provision; encouraging partnership.

Lastly, Dr Jun noted that the trust deficit could be alleviated by focusing on the character of development, and not just the results of development. By prioritising and mainstreaming SSE values, a common rallying point for the principles and goals of sustainable development could be achieved.

SDGs & ASEAN Community: Dr Khoo Ying Hooi (University of Malaya):

Dr Khoo observed that SDGs serve as an opportunity for ASEAN, since it expressed similar aspirations that the ASEAN community had expressed in its post-2015 vision, which aimed to "promote [the] development of clear ASEAN Development Goals (ADG)". However, she noted that the ADGs were not clearly defined as of now, although the common starting date of 2015 suggested that the ADGs would be linked to the SDGs.

She also noted that the SDGs had to prioritise greater institutional coordination, since this was typically lacking. She then pointed out the previous suggestions of integrating the SDGs into the ASEAN community roadmaps, and the establishment of an ASEAN expert community.

She then noted that large financial investments and governance issues were some of the key challenges when it came to the implementation of the SDGs. Without a proper coordinating mechanism, ASEAN response could be fragmented, thus providing little support during the national and sub-national implementation of the SDGs.

While the cross-cutting nature of the SDGs meant that there were difficulties in incorporating it into the ASEAN structure, Dr Khoo argued that "addressing the governance challenge in terms of implementation and monitoring" was crucial. She ended by noting that encouraging multi-stakeholder participation (instead of the usual top-down approach) was also important.

Gerald Joseph, Pusat Komuniti Masyarakat (KOMAS):

Mr Joseph began by noting that it would be difficult to find "the correct path" to the SDGs. He argued that the Malaysian context had to start from the 'trust deficit', and brought up the example of the Orang Asli community still suffering from the lack of basic amenities even though RM700 million had been assigned to the Orang Asli community a few years ago.

He pointed out that the omission of the 'human rights' term from the SDGs was deliberate, allowing governments to free themselves from the obligation of conforming with a more demanding human rights legal approach.

He expressed concerns about how the framework for the implementation of the SDGs was not in place, citing his own past experience in being unable to secure a meeting with the Attorney-General. He also noted that relevant stakeholders were often omitted from policy decisions that affected them, and that there was a serious problem with access to information.

Moving on to the framework's focus on empowering citizens, he noted that individuals who offered critical input were often labelled as being 'anti-development'; most government officials disliked criticism from civil society representatives. By utilising citizen-corroborated data instead of government statistics, Mr Joseph believed that the SDGs were closer to being achieved.

SDGs and Faith Responses: Dr Ahmad Farouk Musa (IRF):

Dr Ahmad noted that economic growth was generally a secular area, with more concern for numbers, facts, figures, statistics, as opposed to issues of faith. However, he argued that it was "very important" to understand the role of faith in sustainable development.

He chose not to talk specifically about any specific faith, since Malaysia is a multi-religious society. He noted that there was no specific mention of faith in the 17 SDG goals, although Goal 16, with its emphasis on peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice and institutional accountability, was related to the importance of the freedom of conscience, or the freedom of religion.

He referenced a study which found that the freedom of belief was associated with global economic growth. While the study did not prove that religious freedom stimulated economic growth, it suggested that this area should be critically considered. The study also found that there was a correlation between religious freedom and economic competitiveness.

Another key finding was that peaceful countries with a low level of religious hostilities and restrictions were more innovative, and that laws and practices that excluded religion were related to higher levels of corruption.

He then proceeded to champion the importance of having a conscience which is guided by the belief that one's actions in life would be evaluated in the afterlife.

Dr Ahmad that argued that inter-religious and intra-religious tolerance was also important, since intra-religious conflict between different religious denominations were one of the factors disrupting the peace in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. He noted that this was a rising problem in Malaysia, with *Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor* (JAIS) trying to round-up Shi'ites for celebrating Ashura day here.

He argued for the importance of religious tolerance in reducing the possibility of conflict and stimulating economic growth, alongside the embrace of pluralism (which was apparently a 'bad word' in Malaysia) within the Malaysian context.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Dr Denison asked Datuk Yogeesvaran to clarify if Malaysia had committed to the full SDG document (i.e. all seventeen goals), or only part of it.

Datuk Yogeesvaran explained that the SDGs were not a treaty or convention that nation states had to ratify, and noted that several countries had expressed a partial alignment to certain goals and targets. The SDGs were thus a voluntary and flexible initiative; each country could set their own targets according to their own circumstances, levels of development, cultural background, etc.

Dr Denison thus clarified that the SDG framework was "aspirational and comprehensive", but participation was voluntary. He noted that reaching the SDG goals and achieving the recommendations made by the panelists

would be a "long process", and thanked everyone for participating in the discussion.

Mr Rama asked about how the SDG framework would affect a conversation change within ASEAN, referring specifically to the haze problem. He also raised concerns about the lack of a mid-term review for the 10th Malaysia Plan and the general public's lack of availability and access to information and data, noting that there were 169 SDG indicators which made it almost impossible to monitor.

Dr Ho raised concerns about the refugee problem, the haze issue, and opined that oil palm plantations were not necessarily harming the environment, since deforestation led to the replanting of another crop. Other concerns raised include the possibility that the SDGs' human rights focus would shift attention away from the environmental concerns, the lack of effective public participation in governmental decision making, the effects of rural-urban migration, the lack of representation on behalf of the corporate sector within the panel, and the right of Orang Asli to 'not be developed'.

Datuk Yogeesvaran noted that no mid-term review for 10th Malaysia plan was necessary, since the Economic Transformation Plan was a rolling plan that made a mid-term review redundant. He also agreed that the government had to be more open, consultative and transparent. He also noted that there was a need for more data (but pointed out that data accumulation was costly) and said that the government was moving towards more transparency and that the Department of Statistics was improving along the way.

Mr Alizan then addressed the environment issue, and noted that the environment was one of the three pillars of sustainable development. He pointed out that the environment NGOs were an important lobby, but were unfortunately not represented at the panel. Since the SDGs included 17 goals and 169 targets, there was nevertheless the possibility that some goals would be prioritised at the expense of others. He stressed on the importance of the interconnections between the various goals, and pointed out that the haze issue was represented in the SDG framework (via health impacts and efforts to reduce the environmental impact of cities, including air pollution).

Mr Stephen Dass noted that the issue of quality of participation was an ongoing one, since parties that possessed contradictory opinions to the government were often not invited to discussions. He noted that politics often took precedence, and made a distinction between the interests of civil service agents and political party leaders.

Andrew Khoo then noted that the SDG framework was not legally-binding, and thus not enforceable. He pondered on whether ASEAN would eventually evolve into a rules-based environment, where member nations committed themselves to a set of binding rules. While basic legally-binding frameworks were in place for issues relating to trade, he hoped that SDG-related frameworks would eventually translate into ground rules.

Ivy Josiah noted that Malaysia is doing very well in negotiations about climate justice, and pointed out that NGOs were invited to the discussion that took place

abroad. However, she noted that the government has yet to sufficiently fulfil the various international commitments made since 1990s, and pointed that the "exhausting part of NGOs is to draw on various commitments" and keep the government accountable to the various conventions it had previously ratified.

Dr Denison then noted that business and human rights components were implied within the framework, and that Prime Minister Najib Razak had expressed a global commitment to the SDGs in New York (though this was not highlighted locally). He argued that the SDGs had to be held alongside CEDAW, Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other conventions, as a holistic commitment.

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Appendix 1

PANEL DISCUSSION on Sustainable Development Goals and Human Rights, a Framework for Conflict Resolution and Mediation: Implications for Malaysia & ASEAN, organised by Proham, GMM and KITA-UKM

Date: 27th October 2015
Time: 2.00 - 4.30 p.m.,
Venue: Meeting Room 310, Level 3,
     Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, KL

Programme Objectives:
1. To review the Agenda 2030 document on Sustainable Development Goals which was endorsed by the global community in New York at the UN General Assembly held on Sept 25, 2015
2. To draw out the implications of this agenda on development, human rights, environment and democracy
3. To note the implications for development planning and economic growth in ASEAN in general and Malaysia in particular
4. To discern the usefulness of the SDG framework in addressing socio-economic deprivation together with peoples participation as a strategy to foster conflict resolution and reconciliation
5. To discuss the possibility of establishing a Malaysian Civil Society Alliance on SDGs: Agenda 2030 for Policy Advocacy and Monitoring

Panel Speakers
1. Datuk K. Yogeesvaran (EPU, JPM): SDGs & Malaysia's Commitment

2. Dato' Aishah Bidin (SUHAKAM): SDGs & Human Rights
3. Mr Alizan Mahandi (ISIS): SDGs, Sustainability & Environment
4. Mr Asrul Daniel (GMM): SDGs & Conflict Resolution
5. Mr Andrew Khoo (Bar Council): SDGs & Access to Justice
6. Ms Ivy Josiah (PROHAM): SDGs & Gender
7. Mr Stephen Dass (Yayasan Budi Penyayang): Youth & SDGs
8. Mr Mohammad Shukri (COMMACT): SDGs & People Centred Development
9. Dr Jun-E Tan (ASEC): SDG & Solidarity Economy
10. Dr Khoo Ying Hooi (University of Malaya): SDGs & ASEAN Community
11. Gerald Joseph (KOMAS): SDGs & UPR
12. Dr Ahmad Farouk Musa (IRF): SDGs & Faith Responses
13. PANEL MODERATOR: Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria (KITA-UKM & PROHAM)

Appendix 2

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) AND HUMAN RIGHTS
By Dato' Dr Aishah Bidin, SUHAKAM

Background
The SDGs were developed out of far more participatory and global process than the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and have a broader coverage of topics and targets. The influence of human rights advocates could be seen in the acknowledgement of rights throughout the text of "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

The SDGs are inextricably linked to human rights through the following goals:

1. Goals concerning economic, social and cultural rights:
   Quite a few goals place emphasis on the importance of economic and social rights such as poverty (Goal 1), food security and improved nutrition (Goal 2), health and well-being (Goal 3), quality education (Goal 4), and water and sanitation (Goal 6); all of which are enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

2. Goals concerning civil and political rights:
   The SDGs also include a goal on accountable and inclusive institutions and access to justice for all (Goal 16). This goal touches on important human rights standards and principles, for example including targets on access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms; participation in

decision-making; non-discriminatory laws and policies; and access to justice. The inclusion of such commitments provides a much-needed recognition of the crucial role that civil and political rights play in making sustainable and equitable development possible.

3. Emphasising the principles of equality, non-discrimination and access for all:
   The need to address growing inequalities within and between countries has been repeatedly identified as a key priority, by states and civil society alike, throughout the process of formulating the SDGs. There are two goals that focus specifically on inequalities: Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 10, which focuses on income inequality, exclusion (social, economic and political) and discrimination. The other goals and targets also include important language on equal and universal access (e.g. to healthcare, education, and energy) and tackling gender disparities – reflecting the core human rights principle of non-discrimination and equality. Persons with disabilities, older persons, indigenous peoples and children are also specifically named in some of the targets.

The SDGs, unlike the MDGs, are more directly relevant to human rights. MDGs undercut economic, social and cultural (ECOSOC) rights standard quite significantly while SDGs are much more adhering to the provision of ECOSOC rights standard. For instance, Goal 7 of MDGs targeted that by 2020, there would be a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers. This goal could be met through the measure of force eviction. SDGs Target 11.1 on housing are now

framed much more human rights compliance - by 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums – completely different framing and much more consistent with ECOSOC rights. The SDGs are universally applicable. MDGs were seen as agenda for developing countries alone while the developed countries merely playing a supporting role in international development cooperation, while SDGs require commitment of all countries to address deprivation and inequalities in their respective countries.

The SDGs and the Role of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)

It is crucial that NHRIs play an active role in this follow-up and review process so as to ensure that human rights principles and the human rights-based approach to development are at the centre of efforts towards achieving the SDGs and its targets. The International Coordinating Committee of NHRIs (ICC) in its statement on the subject of a Follow-up and Review Mechanism for the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda, called upon Member States to draw on the modalities and experiences of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which adopts a practical follow-up and review mechanism applicable to all Member States; is based on transparent information and open dialogue; and is participatory and accessible to all stakeholders. In order to facilitate the implementation of SDGs, NHRIs can play a vital role in assisting Governments to adapt the SDGs to develop national goals, targets and indicators for implementation purposes at the national level.

NHRIs may also contribute towards the fulfilment of the SDGs by monitoring the Governments' implementation of the SDGs in order to ensure that it is in compliance with the international human rights standards. NHRIs may play a bridging role in ensuring that there is meaningful and inclusive engagement/consultations between Government and civil society organisations during the implementation process of the SDGs. The Commission, during its Work Plan 2016 retreat which was held from 17-19 October 2015, agreed that the SDGs would serve as over-arching theme of the Commission's programmes and activities during the SDGs implementation period, given the role that is expected of NHRIs in the SDGs. Several activities were planned for next year such as nationwide roadshow to create awareness on SDGs as well as discussions and meetings with relevant Government agencies to obtain the Government plan in implementing the SDGs.

What is the role of NHRIs in ensuring that 'no one is left behind'?
NHRIs could monitor the progress of SDGs with the aim of reducing inequalities and eliminating discrimination by ensuring the desegregation of data involving the poor and vulnerable group such as women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons, indigenous persons, minorities and persons living in extreme poverty. One of the lessons commonly drawn from the MDGs is the need for the SDGs to provide more disaggregated statistics and analysis to account for the most vulnerable and marginalised populations and enhance measurement of discrimination and inequalities both within and among countries. NHRIs should ensure that human rights-based approach effectively applied when implementing SDGs at the

national level, as well as uphold and abide the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC). NHRIs could also facilitate dialogues, interactions between States, private sectors, CSOs and people at large in order to ensure that no one is left behind and encourage meaningful participation in developing policies and programme to implement the SDGs.

SDGs and ASEAN Community
In the preamble of the ASEAN Charter 2008, it is stated that all members are "to ensure sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations and to place the well-being, livelihood and welfare of the peoples at the centre of the ASEAN community building process". ASEAN Community and SDGs both have 2015 as starting date and many environmental impacts are expected from increased regional economic and social integration in ASEAN (trans-boundary/transnational solutions). ASEAN could prioritise SDGs as part of their integration post 2015 by using existing institutional framework; Economic Community, Political and Security Community and Socio-cultural Community. ASEAN has already incorporated the MDGs into their main strategies for regional integration and it should take into account SDGs in their regional integration process as well. The existing ASEAN Blueprints for Regional Integration which will be implemented in earnest from the end of 2015, emphasise on the following:

a) food security, quality and sustainability of production;
b) health issues and universal health care; and
c) regional and national development gaps.

Appendix 3

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND ASEAN COMMUNITY
By Dr Khoo Ying Hooi, University of Malaya

How can ASEAN promote the realisation of SDGs? We are basically hearing the same language of socially responsible, people-oriented and people-centred development in SDGs and ASEAN. Recognising that the MDGs might have failed certain people and countries, the 2030 Agenda sets out to "reach the furthest behind first" and concludes with a pledge that "no one will be left behind".

SDGs are an opportunity for ASEAN. ASEAN should utilise the adoption of SDGs to both strengthen and partly refocus their framework for regional integration, as doing so would better serve sustainable development across the region. In practice, this would mean aligning the overall objectives of the ASEAN Community with those of the SDGs and strengthening this regional framework.

While the establishment of the ASEAN Community later in 2015 is already a fact, what will actually happen post-2015 in Southeast Asia is not yet clear. In the Naypyidaw Declaration (2014) on ASEAN's post-2015 vision, we can see that ASEAN members decided to "promote development of clear and measurable ASEAN Development Goals (ADGs) to serve as ASEAN benchmark for key socio-economic issues". It is positive to see such a commitment in an open regional declaration; yet, it does not seem to gain much exposure.

How, exactly, can the ASEAN do so?

First, ASEAN Community and SDGs both have 2015 as starting date. Many environmental impacts are expected from increased regional economic and social integration in ASEAN (trans-boundary/ transnational solutions). ASEAN could prioritise SDGs as part of their integration post-2015. Second, to also use existing institutional framework but make greater effort at institutional coordination. For example by expanding the two-track approach to plan and implement for future goals and targets.

There have been suggestions such as, to incorporate SDGs using pre-existing mechanisms, to incorporate SDGs into ASEAN Community Roadmaps (2016-2025) and to establish ASEAN SDG Expert Committee that sits institutionally across the three blueprints.

There are, however, several key challenges. One is the financial challenge in term of big investments. Second is the governance issue. Innovations and improvements in governance will be needed at every level. Legislative, and regulatory changes are going to be needed for sustainable development. The whole of government approaches are also needed across economic, social, and environmental decision-making.

Hence, one crucial point that I would like to highlight is the multi-stakeholder participation, which is by increasing the engagement and meaningful involvement of non-state actors in ASEAN meetings, which directly reflect the spirit of ASEAN Community. That means, development actors of all kinds will need

to work collaboratively across the range of inter-linked SDGs.

In her public lecture entitled, "*The SDGs: Key Considerations for a People-Centred ASEAN*" on 19 October in IDFR, Helen Clark, the Administrator of UNDP too particularly emphasised the multi-stakeholders dialogue. Agenda 2030 requires broad coalitions to be formed: of governments - national and local, multilateral and regional organisations, civil society, NGOs, academic and research organisations, and the private sector. This is precisely one of today's key objectives, which is to establish a Malaysian CSO alliance on SDGs, which I think is a wonderful strategy to start with.

Up to today, there is still little information on ADGs. It would seem that the consultation might only occur at a high level among ASEAN member countries. Such region-specific development goals at one hand could provide room for more focused discussions and stronger partnerships in the context of ASEAN, but they are difficult to facilitate. To this end, the process of defining goals must be transparent, participatory and inclusive. Therefore, the framework of the ADGs and SDGs should be formulated in extensive consultation involving stakeholders at local, national and regional level.

Previously, the MDGs have mainly been handled within the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) and institutional links of ASCC with other pillars have been limited. However, in contrast, the future SDGs should be more embedded throughout the three Community Blueprints. Without effective institutional coordination mechanisms, ASEAN's institutional response for the

SDGs will likely be fragmented and as a result, only able to provide very limited support for national and sub-national implementation.

Therefore, far more attention is needed to addressing governance challenges in term of implementation and monitoring. Currently, the cross-cutting nature of SDGs makes it hard to find a "comfortable" fit within current ASEAN's structure. ASEAN's treatment of the MDGs suggests that with the existing structure, effective coordination will be challenging. The ASEAN itself is based on three loosely-coordinated Community pillars that are further subdivided into a large number of sectoral ministerial and working group mechanisms, and which also involve a number of different dialogue partners and external non-government stakeholders.

Appendix 4

WAY FORWARD TOWARDS A CIVIL SOCIETY ALLIANCE FOR MONITORING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)
By Alizan Mahadi, Fellow, Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS)

Background
The SDGs were adopted as the global development agenda at the United Nations General Assembly on September 2015. With the implementation phase now in full swing from 2016 – 2030, the means of implementing the framework is currently being discussed at the national level with a National Conference on the SDGs to be held on February 23rd 2016, organised by the Economic Planning Unit (EPU). Moving forward, CSOs have been recognised as playing a crucial role in both monitoring and in implementation of the SDGs. The SDGs, cutting across various goals, at various levels, and committing to the principle of 'leave no one behind' will require a new way of operating that goes beyond government functions.

On 30th November 2015, more than 20 civil society organisation leaders from diverse areas gathered to discuss the role of civil society organisations in monitoring the SDGs. Some of the key messages transpired from the meeting are:

• The importance of the government generally and the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) to recognise the role of CSOs
• The need to work together with EPU and at the same time maintaining independence

- The suggestion for EPU to set up an Inter-Agency Planning Group or equivalent for the SDGs which includes CSOs leaders
- The need to strengthen monitoring capacities within the CSO community
- The emphasis on being inclusive and assess 'on the ground' realities to take into account the 'invisibles'
- The suggestion to go beyond an indicator framework towards an assessment framework
- The consensus of exploring a Civil Society Alliance for Monitoring a way forward
- The suggestion to hold a session to better understand the SDGs and map out the members that are interested to address the specific goals and targets

Discussion
As a way forward, a few key areas need to be discussed in establishing the Civil Society Alliance:

Institutional – What is the structure of the CSO Alliance?
- Is it institutional or based on individual capacity?
- Is it a loose network or one based on a binding legal document or even a legal entity?
- What is the modus operandi and governance structure of the alliance?
- What is the relationship between the alliance and the government (i.e. EPU as part of the alliance, observer or other?), and through what process should the alliance liaise with the government (i.e. advocating an IAPG to be set up with the Alliance represented)?

Capacity – What are the current available capacities and capabilities within the CSO community that can contribute towards monitoring and implementing the SDGs?

- Is there an opportunity to map out the relevant CSOs including their capacities, capabilities and best practices according to the various goals and targets of the SDGs?
- What are the current capacities in monitoring the SDGs – i.e. the data and empirical knowledge that currently resides within the CSO community?

Core objectives – What are the vision, mission and key objectives of the alliance?

- Should the alliance focus on assessment beyond macro level data and focus on 'on the ground' realities and qualitative monitoring of the SDGs?
- How would the alliance be most effective in creating a bottom-up process in monitoring and implementing the SDGs and improve social mobilisation?
- How can the CSO community strengthen evidence-based knowledge and capacities through the SDGs framework?

2 February 2015

Appendix 5

PROHAM PRESS RELEASE: HUMAN RIGHTS & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS – "NO ONE WILL BE LEFT BEHIND"

PROHAM congratulates the global community and the United Nations in formulating the 2030 Global Agenda entitled "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

This action plan, which replaces the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), is universal in nature and comprehensive in the range of issues and concerns addressed pertaining to development, economy, human rights and the environment.

The theme of "no one will be left behind" is most critical so as to ensure that inclusive development is within the reach of all people and communities.

PROHAM also recognises that Malaysia endorsed this global action plan and at New York, the Prime Minister has made an open pledge for its effective implementation in Malaysia and its role in the global and regional arena.

Yesterday (Oct 1, 2915), PROHAM hosted a lecture entitled "Human Rights and Sustainable Development Goals" (SDG) delivered by Dr Lin Mui Kiang at Brickfields Asia College, PJ Campus.

In the lecture, Dr Lin highlighted the details of the 2030 agenda with 17 goals and 169 specific targets. She recognised that Malaysia did very well in fulfilling

the MDGs but also indicated that there were some gaps in addressing urban poverty & inequality, concerns pertaining to quality of education and achievements as well as some emerging health issues which should be addressed in the SDGs.

It was noted that the SDGs will provide a more comprehensive framework in addressing the concerns of the bottom 40% ensuring not just equal access but also outcomes. The SDGs build on a strong commitment to people-centred development, human rights and environmental sustainability.

In the discussion that followed, a number of key issues were raised which require greater attention in Malaysia. These include:

First, the Agenda 2030 could serve as the Outline Perspective Plan for Malaysia (2016 - 2030), thereby encompassing three Malaysia Plans (11th, 12th & 13th);

Second, concerns were raised on effective implementation and monitoring. In this context, it was felt that capability building of the officers is necessary to enhance so that they can undertake the delivery in a more effective way;

Third, concern was raised with the dual talk of national leaders – the conversation and discourse at the global stage is very universal and human rights friendly, however, at the home ground, issues are very narrowly defined and inconsistent with the global agenda. There is often a down playing of the human rights framework for sustainable development especially the

empowerment of the poor, women and indigenous forest-based communities;

Fourth, it was felt that greater efforts must be taken by government to collect and release data including disaggregated data so as to ensure all sections of the Bottom 40% community especially forest-based communities and ethnic minorities have equal access to the services in the spirt of inclusive development for all;

Fifth, while it is the primary role of the civil service to ensure effective delivery and monitoring, it was felt that there must be greater space provided for civil society, academics and private sector participation in this process.

An open dialogue process should be facilitated so as to enhance the participation of all stakeholders in an effective way as sustainable development partners.

In this context, PROHAM proposes that the Federal Government establishes a "National Consultative Council on Agenda 2030", very much like the National Economic Consultative Council of the past with a full time secretariat utilising existing resources from within EPU, ICU & Pemandu.

The Federal Government must ensure that this Council is comprised of Malaysians from both sides of the political divide as well as representatives from ethnic and professional societies including members from academia, civil society and private sector.

Issued on behalf of PROHAM by Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria, (PROHAM, Secretary General), Oct 2, 2015.

Appendix 6

Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

By Dr. Jun-E Tan, Asian Solidarity Economy Council

Within this reflection paper, strong compatibility of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is outlined, followed by the call for SSE as a means of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Malaysian context is also addressed, explaining that the 11th Malaysia Plan contains many references to the SSE, thus providing a potential pathway towards sustainable development.

The SSE and its Relevance to Sustainable Development

The Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) has been defined by the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on SSE as

"the production of goods and services by a broad range of organisations and enterprises that have explicit social and often environmental objectives, and are guided by principles and practices of cooperation, solidarity, ethics and democratic self-management. The field of SSE includes cooperatives and other forms of social enterprise, self-help groups, community-based organisations, associations of informal economy workers, service-provisioning NGOs, solidarity finance schemes, amongst others."[1]

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[1] United Nations Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (TFSSE). (2014). Social and Solidarity Economy and the Challenge of

As can be seen from the definition, SSE encompasses explicitly the three focus areas commonly thought of as the pillars of sustainable development (social, environmental and economic), and accommodates comfortably the five focus areas of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, namely people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership.

At a practical level, the SSE is relevant to the sustainable development agenda because it is an inherently integrated approach to achieve the SDGs. The SSE at its core establishes the importance of incorporating values, practices and institutions associated with cooperation, association, solidarity, reciprocity and redistribution into development policy. It focuses on collective action and community empowerment to effect change at the local level – a local approach with a global outlook. As this is not a new area for implementation, practical examples and case studies can be identified together with best practices that can be emulated or scaled up.

The SSE, with its position and history of challenging business-as-usual approaches, can serve as a valuable resource and ally to champion for structural changes needed to advance sustainable development.

SSE as the Means of Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Efforts in mapping the SDG-SSE connections have revealed that grassroots SSE movements have

demonstrated their versatile capability in addressing all the 16 main goals, diverse as they are, and are therefore well-positioned as a means of implementation of the sustainable development agenda.[2] The SSE has also gained high level support from country leaders such as the President of France, Mr. François Hollande who expressed that the underlying principles of the SDGs are inspired by SSE.[3]

Although strong arguments have been made by proponents of SSE in using it as a vehicle for sustainable development, the term "social and solidarity economy" was not mentioned in the 2030 Agenda. It was also noted that there was no mention of solidarity finance or financial institutions that are locally owned, community sourced or self-managed within the UN Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), an action agenda that has been heavily lobbied by developed countries to be the financial means of implementation of the SDGs.[4] These sobering developments indicate that there are still multiple hurdles to cross before the promise of SSE bringing forth sustainable development can be realised, among other limitations within the field such as the lack of funding, capacity and policy support at the national level.

[2] Utting, P. 2015. "Realizing the 2030 Development Agenda through Social and Solidarity Economy: A Think Piece by Peter Utting", accessible at https://ccednet-rcdec.ca/sites/ccednet-rcdec.ca/files/realizing_the_2030_development_agenda_through_social_and_solidarity_economy.pdf
[3] UNRISD. 29 September 2015. "Strong Task Force representation at High Level event of the Leading Group on SSE", accessible at http://unsse.org/?p=1205
[4] Nardi, J. 2015. "Addis Ababa: Failing to Finance Development", accessible at http://www.ripess.org/addis-ababa-failing-to-finance-development/?lang=en

Provisions for the 11th Malaysia Plan for the SSE

It is important to note at this juncture that a mapping exercise by this researcher on the 11th Malaysia Plan discovered that there are ample mentions of SSE subsectors within the five-year developmental plan. Policy support and inclusive participation have been pledged to SSE subsectors including co-operatives, community- and social-based enterprises, associations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs)[5]. The general observation is that the SSE is seen as a means to help marginalised groups such as the poorest 40% of Malaysian households (known as bottom 40% or B40 households in the 11MP) and indigenous people, and to provide social services in partnership with the government and private sectors.

Conclusion

In sum, research on SSE has shown that it holds immense potential for sustainable development, even if it remains an overlooked area within the scope of the 2030 Agenda. To achieve the SDGs, Malaysia can capitalise upon its existing policy support and provisions for the SSE subsectors to jumpstart its trajectory towards a sustainable future that leaves no one behind.

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[5] Associations, NGOs and CBOs that run economic activities are considered to be part of the SSE.

Photos of CSO discussions

About this book:
Sustainable Development Goals and Malaysia Society: Civil Society Perspectives documents the views of civil society leaders on the future path of the development agenda that Malaysia should adopt and implement – towards 2030. The call here is for balanced development to ensure "no one will be left behind". It is based on a holistic development paradigm which provides equal focus on people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. Therefore socio-economic development, human rights and environment are all essential dimensions of sustainable development.

Biodata
Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria (PJN, PhD) is a Principal Research Fellow at the Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA) UKM, Bangi since 2008. He was recently appointed as Adjunct Professor (Social Development) at UUM College of Arts & Social Science, Northern University of Malaysia at Sintok, Kedah. He is also the Secretary General of the Society for the Promotion of Human Rights (PROHAM).

About KITA
The Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA) was officially established on 8 October 2007 by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) to undertake academic research on subjects pertaining to ethnic studies in Malaysia. This research institute is 'only one of its kind' in Malaysia, focusing specifically on 'ethnic studies' with thematic studies orientation. The Institute emerged out of the need to maintain at home the present peaceful inter- and intra-ethnic existence against worldwide problematic, and sometimes violent ethnic situations.

Organisationally, KITA has six research clusters, each being led by a prominent scholar or a highly experienced professional person. The six research clusters are: Social Theory and Ethnic Studies; Ethnicity and Religion; Ethnicity at Workplace; Ethnicity and Consumerism; Arts and Social Integration; Ethnicity and Food. KITA's postgraduate program (PhD and Masters) was launched in December 2009.

Mengenai KITA
Institut Kajian Etnik (KITA) ditubuhkan secara rasmi oleh Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia pada 8 Oktober 2007. KITA merupakan satu-satunya institut penyelidikan di Malaysia yang memberi tumpuan sepenuhnya kepada segala kajian berkaitan dengan 'etnik' dan 'etnisiti'.

Dari segi organisasi, KITA mempunyai enam rumpun penyelidikan. Setiap satu rumpun diketuai oleh seorang sarjana atau ahli profesional yang mempunyai rekod prestasi cemerlang. Enam rumpun penyelidikan berkenaan adalah: Teori Sosial dan Kajian Etnik; Etnisiti dan Agama; Etnisiti di Tempat Kerja; Etnisiti dan Konsumerisme; Kesenian dan Integrasi Sosial; Etnisiti dan Makanan. Mulai Disember 2009, KITA menawarkan program siswazah (Doktor Falsafah dan Sarjana).