

QUESTIONS ON VNR SESSION 4 ON MALAYSIA ON JULY 17, 2017

Question One

Speaker Mr Atama Katama (Tebtebba / IPMG)

I am Atama Katama of PACOS Trust, Malaysia speaking on behalf of the Indigenous Peoples Major Group, take this opportunity to firstly congratulate the Malaysian government for participating in this Voluntary National Review and acknowledge the work undertaken over the years in addressing poverty from a multi-dimensional level. We also commend the Malaysian government for recognizing the importance of biodiversity and ecosystems by including a review of Goal 15 in the 8 goals discussed in this VNR.

One major area of concern in the VNR reporting is the lack of disaggregated data and the total lack of any reference to groups living in poverty, to ensure 'no one is left behind'.

Our question is what commitment can Malaysia give pertaining to rectifying the lack of disaggregated data, free prior and informed consent relating to the bumiputera indigenous people, despite them being the most deprived under all the goals especially the Anak Negeri & Pemakai Menoa namely the natives of Sabah, Sarawak & Orang Asli of Peninsular Malaysia, urban poor especially the Bottom 40, women, disabled people, displaced plantation workers, refugees, asylum seekers, sexual and gender minorities and targeting such groups in the SDG implementation?

Question 2

Speaker Mr Rizal Rozhan (Asia Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development and part of the Women's Major Group).

Thank you Chair. I am Rizal Rozhan, representing EMPOWER Malaysia, the Coalition of Malaysian NGOs in the UPR Process (COMANGO) and the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) which is also part of the Malaysian CSO SDG Alliance. I take this opportunity to acknowledge that the Economic Planning Unit of the Malaysian Government has engaged with a section of Malaysian NGOs in the VNR process. However, we like to state that this engagement must not just be consultative for inputs but we must be genuine partners in sustainable development.

One aspect that we feel that is absent is the rising fundamentalism and extremism, impunity towards selected non-state actors, shrinking of democratic, inclusive spaces for dialogue which ultimately disempowers the voices of marginalized communities such as women, persons with disabilities, refugees, asylum seekers, ethnic and religious minorities and sexual and gender minorities.

Our question is, what guarantees can the government of Malaysia provide here to ensure that these trends are reversed in the future and that the space for meaningful engagement in SDG

implementation will be enhanced in line with fundamental human rights principles and standards?

Question 3

Speaker : Denison Jayasooria (RIPESS)

I am Denison Jayasooria of the Malaysian CSO-SDG Alliance. At the outset, I must acknowledge the effective strategies in addressing poverty in Malaysia and the data as provided in the VNR indicates the impressive track record. However, our concern in the CSO community is that the measurement of poverty used is the Poverty Line Index set for the poorest countries of the world. However, if one uses the measurements of developed countries such as multi-dimensional indicators including median or medium income measurements, then a true picture of the Bottom 40% especially among the urban poor living in high rise flats highlights their experience of deprivation and powerless with rising inequalities in Malaysian society.

The question from the civil society community is how would the government address more effectively rising inequalities and exclusion of the urban poor including the informal sector through SDG which seek not only to improve socio-economic conditions but also their democratic rights for participation at the local levels to address these in a holistic way?

Prepared jointly by Rizal Rozhan, Atama Katama, Omair Paul & Denison Jayasooria

July 13, 2017

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