

## Statistics play a vital social role

KUALA LUMPUR: In dealing with the health and economic consequences of Covid-19, the government has learnt that statistics can help ensure there is food for all Malaysians, says Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed.

"What the government has learnt from dealing with the pandemic is that there is a need to compile and disseminate granular and real-time statistics.

"For example, in providing help to the people, we need a much more robust data mechanism tracking micro, small and medium enterprises and people living under the poverty line.

"Statistics can help us ensure that food remains on every Malaysian's table," he said when delivering his opening remarks virtually at the Eighth Malaysia Statistics Conference (8th MyStats) 2021 here yesterday.

Mustapa said the pandemic had also boosted the importance of statistics, as people wanted to have the latest information on unemployment and inflation, on a monthly – if not weekly – basis.

"Statistics, as they say, do not lie," he was reported as saying by Bernama.

To meet the people's expectations, he said there was a need for the rapid and transparent dissemination of granular data to the public. Touching on the 2020 Malaysian Population and Housing Census (Census 2020), Mustapa said as of Oct 14, 2021, 90% of the population had been covered and the Statistics Department remains committed to completing it by the end of this month.

Census 2020 was supposed to have been completed by Oct 24, 2020, but had to be postponed due to the pandemic, he added.

Mustapa said none of the department's publications was affected despite the movement control orders and the government's standard operating procedures that have been imposed since last year.

"All 519 publications in 2020 and 269 publications in 2021 (as of Sept 30) were released on time," he said. Meanwhile, chief statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said the department managed to release useful information to the public almost every day despite the several MCOs implemented since the Covid-19 outbreak.

"Among them is the Malaysian Economic Statistics Review (MESR) report, which has now entered its eighth series containing 322 economic indicators," he said when delivering his welcoming remarks.

Mohd Uzir said 61 Intelligence MCO Impact Case Study reports in several sectors, such as services, construction and manufacturing, were provided to the National Economic Action Council (NEAC) to assist it in formulating the national policy. He said over the years, the department had supplied economic and social statistics to the government for national policy formulation.

“The department will continue to excel with the dissemination of socioeconomic statistics of the smallest geographical level with the publication of MyLocal Stats,” he added.

Themed “Navigating Resilient Recovery Through Statistics”, the 8th MyStats is held simultaneously with the World Statistics Day Celebration. Mohd Uzir said this year’s theme coincides with the world situation today, which is in the recovery phase through the use of statistical solutions as the main platform.

In a statement, the Statistics Department said MyStats Day aims to increase awareness and understanding of the statistical community regarding the importance of statistics to development, as well as the well-being of the people who need correct decisions based on comprehensive and sufficient evidence and facts.

“With the availability of accurate statistics, the channelling of national resources for planning and development can be implemented efficiently and effectively in ensuring that no one is left behind,” it said.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2021/10/21/statistics-play-a-vital-social-role>