

## **12MP has failed to rethink social protection, says MP**

KUALA LUMPUR: The 12th Malaysia Plan has failed to rethink social protection and make it a key policy to drive the nation forward to “build back better” in a post Covid-19 environment, Charles Santiago (PH-Klang) said today in a press conference at Parliament.

“The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed wide gaps in the country’s social protection system with many individuals and businesses falling through the cracks.

“The government must look into an inclusive system which narrows poverty and addresses vulnerability or ‘Keluarga Malaysia’ and Shared Prosperity will remain pleasant and eye-catching only on paper,” he said.

“ Investing in social protection can create domestic demands and generate large positive multiplier effects on the economy and support social and political stability,” he added.

According to Santiago, a robust social protection system aims to reduce poverty, inequality and vulnerability in the labour market. In addition it is designed to boost human capital, empower women and respond to economic uncertainties.

In the last two years, he pointed out that the system was ineffective and inadequate in responding to job losses, loss of livelihood and income during the pandemic.

He then cited data from Employees Provident Fund which stated that a total of 46% or 7.32 million EPF members below the age of 55 have less than RM10,000 in their accounts.

**In the second quarter of 2021, Santiago said the Department of Statistics Malaysia showed that around 143,500 between 45 and 64 year old have lost their jobs while 283,000 between the ages of 15 and 24 became unemployed in the same period.**

He also suggested the government to seriously consider amending the law and establish an Employment Insurance Scheme for informal workers as a way of providing them with income security.

Furthermore, he said the government should revamp the existing Bantuan Sara Hidup (BSH) programme by providing an urgent RM1,000 monthly cash transfer to the absolute and hardcore poor households, including groups who have lost their jobs during the pandemic.

Additionally, he said the government should review and implement a new minimum wage system supported by a separate fund to help reduce the burden of Small Medium Entrepreneurs (SMEs).

“It should allocate an annual fund of RM15 billion during the transition period towards the effort,” he added.

<https://www.thesundaily.my/local/12mp-has-failed-to-rethink-social-protection-says-mp-LX8426728>