Malaysia: Changing Needs of Statistics Towards Becoming an Advanced Nation

Abstract

The Department of Statistics Malaysia, the national statistical organization, has been instrumental in Malaysia's development planning process for the last five decades. Traditionally, Malaysia's development plans have been macro-focused in nature, where macroeconomic and industrial policies were formulated at the macro level to operationalise the long-term broad thrusts and strategies in the national development agenda. However, a rapidly changing external landscape and a realignment of policy priorities necessitate a review of data requirement. Megatrends such as rapid urbanization rate, accelerating technological change, an aging world and greater global connections are some of the forces that are expected to disrupt people's lives in future. In addition, the Eleventh Malaysia Plan ushers a new frontier for Malaysia's development planning as its policy focus has become more micro-driven and people-centric. Its macroeconomic targets have expanded beyond pure economic convention to be more multi-dimensional that encompasses both household income and wellbeing targets to ensure inclusivity. Both these changes require a timely and better quality statistics for policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation. This presentation provides the user's point of view of challenges in development planning and the changing needs of statistics for more effective policy formulation and evaluation as Malaysia moves towards becoming a high-income and advanced nation.