

Former UN Special Rapporteur praises Malaysia for raising poverty line but says updated figure still too low...

In reference to the government's announcement yesterday that the absolute poverty line has been revised from RM980 to RM2,208, former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights Philip Alston praised Putrajaya for following through with a commitment to raise the poverty line and give a more accurate picture of the state of poverty in Malaysia.

Malaysia's poverty line index (PLI) has increased by a whopping five percentage points to 5.6 per cent or 405,441 households from 0.4 per cent or 24,700 households in 2016 after Putrajaya revised its PLI calculation methodology.

In a press statement yesterday, Minister in Prime Minister's department Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said that the current national PLI is RM2,208 a month per household, which has increased by more than double from its previous PLI in 2016 which stood at RM980 per household.

UNSR Praises Malaysia for raising PLI, but...

Written by straits-mongrel

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“Malaysia's government has taken a courageous step towards bringing its poverty line closer to reality.

“The line announced today is more than double the previous one and results in an official poverty rate 14 times higher than previously acknowledged,” Alston said in a statement.

He said the challenge now is to systematically address poverty by instituting a comprehensive social protection scheme and to provide greater data transparency, in line with almost all democratic countries.

“The government also needs to take seriously the plight of millions of non-citizens who are disproportionately affected by poverty and excluded from official figures, indigenous people who face severe discrimination and rights violations, and women who have exceptionally low rates of workforce participation,” Alston said.

However, Alston added that the absolute poverty rate of 5.6 per cent under the updated poverty line is still too low and therefore hopes the poverty line will be increased further in future.

“Because the new poverty rate of 5.6 per cent is just one-third of that estimated by almost all independent analyses, I hope that the government will include an even more realistic benchmark in the 12th Malaysia Plan,” he said.

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