**Malaysian CSO SDG Alliance and Kingsley Strategic Institute (KSI) hosted a Conversation on Poverty, Inequality & Human Rights in Malaysia on May 23, 2019 from 10am to 12.30pm at the KSI office in KL**

In this discussion a number of key issues and concerns were discussed

**1 Poverty Measurement**

It was felt that the Poverty line Income (PLI) for Malaysia which is below RM1,000.00 is far too low and that there must be different ones for different parts of the country especially between the urban and rural.

It was also felt that there must be a shift away from household to per person measurement.

The Multi-dimensional poverty indicator (MPI) as provided for in the Eleventh Malaysian Plan is regarded as better as four dimensions are considered therefore moving beyond an income measurement. However just on the four (income, health, education & housing) does not full capture it.

**2 Reality of Poverty**

It was felt that the official data does not capture both the size as well as the deprivation experienced. This is especially so for the Orang Asli and other native groups of Sabah and Sarawak. In these locations the poor do not have asset such as saving and there are issues to land ownership. Debt is a major issues but these indicators are not used to measure poverty among these groups. Loss of cultural heritage is another dimension neglected

**3 Indigenous people and land rights**

There are major violations of human rights on this people with regards to their land rights. This matter well documented by the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) but Federal government & State governments have not been very progressive on this matter. Blockades, protest and resistance on big business and government agencies continues as measures to reclaim their lands.

**4 Vulnerable groups and agenda of leaving no one behind**

It was stated that at a policy level there are political and policy statements but in reality there is very little positive impact on very vulnerable groups like the Orang Asli communities. Even under the current administration these groups are further marginalised

**5 Urban poverty issues**

Urban poverty is the new manifestation as a result of rural urban migration. More focus on addressing inequality from a multi-dimensional aspect. In this context concern was raised about handout approaches as opposed towards building capacity as well as resilience via empowerment strategies.

**6 Health, mal nutrition & non communicable diseases**

Health are major concerns for the poor and more data needs to be released on this matter. Does related to access to water and electricity especially in very interior locations in Sabah and Sarawak.

**7 Documentation & citizenship**

Documentation is a key issues pertaining to poverty and people without documents are left out of all data and no access to services such as health, education, housing and other social support. Major issues faced by former Tamil plantation workers who are currently displaced in urban locations as well as among natives in Sabah and Sarawak from interior and forest based locations like the Penan community. CSO perspective is that Home Affairs and the Registration Department must really review and assist people without documents through a special taskforce.

**8 Education & poor communities**

Educational achievements and experience of drop out from school is high in certain communities such as Orang Asli and other indigenous groups. Underachievement seems high among the urban poor especially Indians

**9 Civil service and efficiency of delivery**

Many spoke of good policies but weak implementation. Some spoke of weak delivery at local government and district level. There is therefore the need to strength deliver and enhance people participation.

**10 Poverty, consumer & cost of living**

CSO spoke of cost of living issues and need for price control. Need for greater consumer awareness.

**11 Poverty & low wages issues**

The issues of low wages and the informal sector must be addressed by effective policies and programs. There must be greater focus on both these groups to enhance their incomes, capabilities and environment for employment of business.

**12 Human Rights Approach to Poverty eradication**

Adopting a Rights based approach to development in the right way foeward.

**13 Recommendations**

There must be collecting and discloser of disaggregated data to capture the reality of poverty on the ground.

There must also be specific targeting of vulnerable and marginalised groups on the ground.

**14 Request made on visits:**

It was noted that the Special Rapporteur visits both the natives of Sabah and Sarawak and the Orang Asli community in Peninsular Malaysia. Alliance partners are willing to facilitate this especially visits to very poor communities.

**Participants at the discussion:-**

1. Prof Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria (Alliance)
2. Ms Alexandra John (Sarawak CSO SDG Alliance)
3. Ms Caroline Chong (KSI)
4. Mr Voon Zhen Yi (KSI)
5. Datuk Yusof Kassim (Commact Malaysia)
6. Dr Madeline Berma (Former UKM)
7. YB Bathma Krishan (Association of Women with disabilities)
8. Dr Thaatchaayin Kananatu (Monash University)
9. Dr Juliana French (Monash University)
10. Dr Sharon Koh (Monash University)
11. Dr Sharifa Ezat UKM Medical Faculty
12. Mr Azrul M.Khalib (Galen Centre)
13. Ms Amanda Ng (Empower)
14. Ms Rizal Rohzan (Empower)
15. Ms Thilaga (Justice for sisters)
16. Ms Jayamalar Samuel (Rhythm Foundation)
17. Ms mary Cheb (Challenges Foundation)
18. Mr Mohd Shaani bin Abdullah (PROHAM)
19. Ms Bina Ramanand (Equal nationality rights for women & men)
20. Mr Jeffrey Phang (MyPJ)
21. Ms Marlini Ramalo (Dhrra Malaysia)
22. Ms Kiah Hui (Malaysian CARE)
23. Ms Pan Choi Yen (Saya Anak Bangsa Malaysia)