

## KERATAN AKHBAR

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TARIKH : 16 JUN 2022

AKHBAR : THE BORNEO POST

MUKA SURAT : <https://www.theborneopost.com/2022/06/16/mustapa-malaysia-must-ensure-economic-growth-equitably-shared-by-all-families/>

### **Mustapa: Malaysia must ensure economic growth equitably shared by all families**



Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed — Bernama photo

KOTA KINABALU (June 16): While remaining cautiously optimistic in its near-term economic outlook, Malaysia must strive to ensure that its economic growth and recovery are equitably shared by all Malaysians, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said.

He said based on a World Bank's report, households in Sabah and Sarawak, as well as in the northern and eastern regions of Peninsular Malaysia were found to experience slower progress in regaining employment and income compared to those in other regions.

He said in 2020, the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita gap between the central region of the country, namely the Klang Valley, Negeri Sembilan and Melaka compared to Sabah and Sarawak were 2.7 per cent and 1.3 per cent, respectively.

“In the 12th Malaysia Plan, we have made it our aim to reduce the gap to 2.5 per cent for Sabah and 1.2 per cent for Sarawak. This is a modest goal which I believe we can achieve. The highest increases in poverty were recorded in states that have been left behind, namely Sabah, Kelantan, Sarawak and Kedah.

“We have been trying our best to mitigate this, indeed the issue of poverty eradication remains high if not one of the main priorities on the government’s agenda,” he said in a recorded speech at the launch of the Malaysia Economic Monitor June 2022 Reports ‘Catching Up: Inclusive Recovery and Growth for Lagging States’ by the World Bank here today.

Present were Dr Ndiame Diop, World Bank country director for Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand; and Economic Planning Unit (EPU) director-general Datuk Seri Saiful Anuar Lebai Hussien.

Mustapa said the EPU and Implementation Coordination Unit (ICU) were spearheading the Keluarga Malaysia Hardcore Poverty Eradication Programme by employing an innovative approach in addressing poverty.

“The programme hinges on local solutions tailored to the unique strengths of particular communities. The first phase will cover 80 localities and will of course, prioritise the states which have the highest poverty rates.

“There is a huge gap between the states of our federation. We must reduce these gaps if we want to achieve a truly happy Keluarga Malaysia, with goodwill prevailing among our multiracial citizens,” he said.

He said every party must do whatever it takes to help grow the often-neglected parts of Malaysia and it is his hope that this World Bank report will provide inputs for the government to formulate policies that could help ensure that the fruits of development are shared by all parts of the country.

Mustapa said hence, it is the government’s objective to make the economy more inclusive and eliminate hardcore poverty.

Meanwhile, Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor, in his recorded special remarks, said although Sabah garnered RM5.4 billion in revenue in 2021, the highest on record, the state is still in a recovery mode.

He said the state faces issues exacerbated by COVID-19, including high increases in the poverty rate and high youth unemployment.

“The federal government has been receptive to the state’s needs through its commitments under the 12th Malaysia Plan to enhance Sabah’s development.

“In the spirit of the national Keluarga Malaysia and state-led Sabah Maju Jaya roadmap, greater state-federal collaboration can strengthen relations and forge understanding to

drive the recovery and development of the state and improve the livelihoods of Sabahans,” he said. — Bernama