

KERATAN AKHBAR

TARIKH : 27 SEPTEMBER 2023

AKHBAR : The Sun

MUKA SURAT : 3

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➤ Move to facilitate compilation of data as world economy, social well-being and environment evolve

KUALA LUMPUR: The government is planning to revise the Statistics Act 1965 in the Dewan Rakyat in July 2024 to increase the Statistics Department's role in strengthening the country's statistical landscape.

Chief statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said the department continues to make strides in producing important statistics as the landscape of globalisation, the world economy, social well-being and the environment evolve.

"The strengthening of the National Statistical System is an

initiative led by the department and has been mandated by the government to strengthen the capabilities of the National Statistical System (NSS).

"This initiative represents a shift towards encouraging innovation and improving the standard of decision-making for the existing NSS," he said in his keynote speech at the launch of the 10th Malaysian Statistics Conference yesterday.

Speaking on the history of Malaysian statistics, Mohd Uzir said the compilation of gross domestic product (GDP) began in 1961 when

the department, at the time known as the Statistics Bureau, released data for the first time with a focus on the agricultural sector, petroleum production and several other key sectors.

He said in the 1970s, Malaysia began to use the input-output method to calculate GDP, which allowed for a more detailed analysis of the economic structure, Bernama reported.

"In the 1980s, the country began to use a real-time series system for data collection to ensure GDP was released more quickly and accurately. In 1993, to help improve the accuracy of economic data and understanding of the country's economic structure, Malaysia began compiling GDP based on the System of National Accounts (SNA) 1968.

"Until now, Malaysia has been using the concepts and methods

outlined in the latest SNA, which is SNA 2008," Mohd Uzir said.

He added that in the early 1990s, Malaysia had taken the first step to compile GDP data every quarter with the help of an expert consultant from New Zealand, Rodney Wellington.

Mohd Uzir explained that although GDP is a well-known and significant economic indicator, it cannot predict the social situation of people in a country and the readiness of a country to face threats.

Therefore, there was a clear demand from policymakers, governments, academics and the public to move statistical measurement frameworks beyond GDP, as defined during the High-level Forum on Official Statistics organised by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Statistics, the United Nations earlier this year.

He stressed that data across the borders of GDP requires a combination of economic, environmental and social indicators that go beyond the measurement of market activity and take into account matters involving people's well-being and environmental sustainability.

Mohd Uzir said it is important for today's statistical community to look beyond GDP to create more comprehensive statistics.