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SDGs: The Nordic Way Exhibition Opening Forum

Achieving the SDGs in Malaysia: Progress & Way Forward

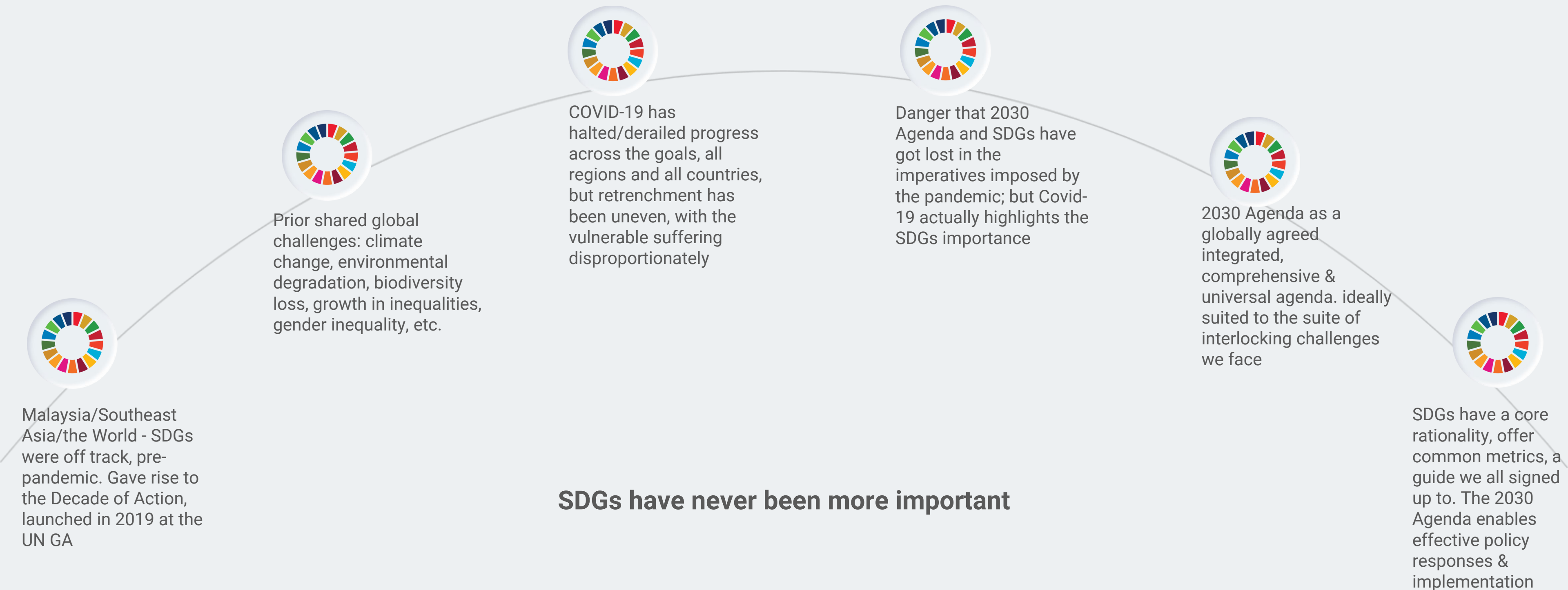


Karima El Korri, Resident Coordinator

8 March 2022

- Reviving *the Decade of Action and* promoting a sustainable and inclusive recovery
- Global SDG progress to date: The post Covid-19 position
- Malaysia SDG progress: where we are now, and where we might be headed
- Key directions for a sustainable recovery and progress on SDGs

Reviving the **Decade of Action** and promoting a sustainable and inclusive recovery



- **Three global Sources**

- UN SG's Annual SDG Report 2021
- SDSN Sustainable Development Report 2021
- UN ESCAP Asia Pacific SDG Progress Report 2021

- **Common challenges**

- Lack of data, lagged nature of indicators
- Pandemic has delayed data collection/compilation
- Leading indicators, proxies, projections/ simulations may not put the full picture



Global Takeaways from COVID-19: Impact on SDGs

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- **Years of progress halted or reversed; SDGs were lagging pre-pandemic**, now further off-track in 2020-2021
- Impacts are direct and indirect. Pandemic will cast long shadow & recovery likely to be uneven
- **Poverty and livelihoods**: first time in a generation that global poverty rose
- **Health and education**: physical & mental health impacts, disruption of health and education services (1st chart)
- **Inequalities and vulnerabilities** have been exposed and reinforced
- **Climate change and environmental pressures**: Emissions has rebounded (2nd chart), little or no interruption
- **COP26** saw some new impetus, but global efforts still require acceleration

Figure 2.12 | Percentage of countries in each region in which schools were closed due to COVID-19

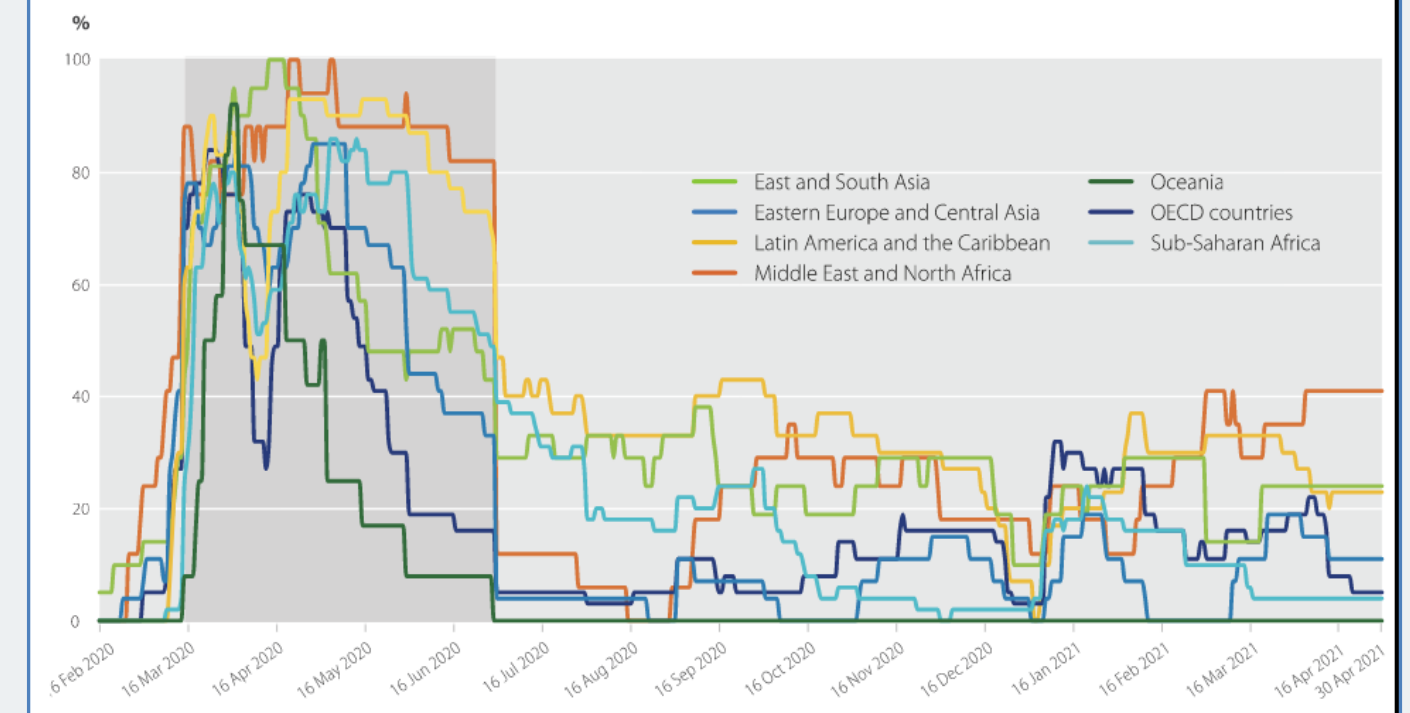
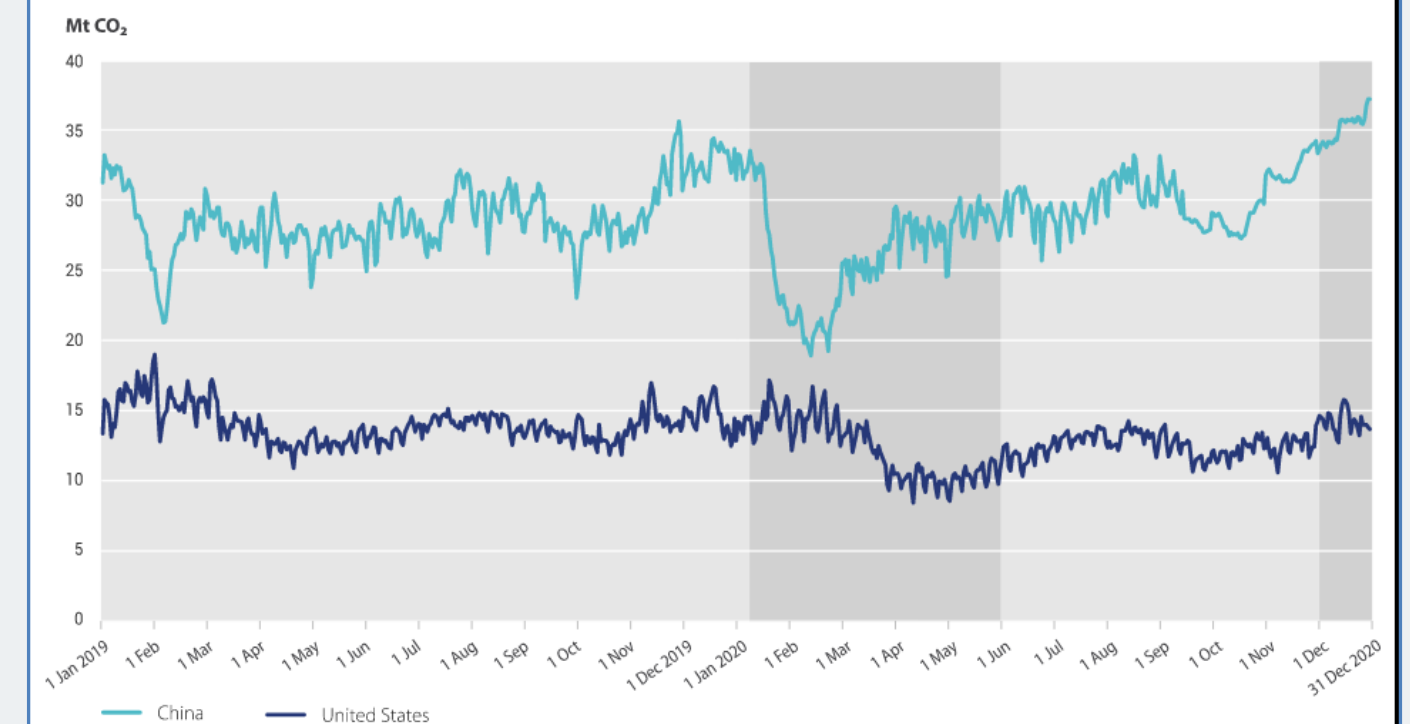
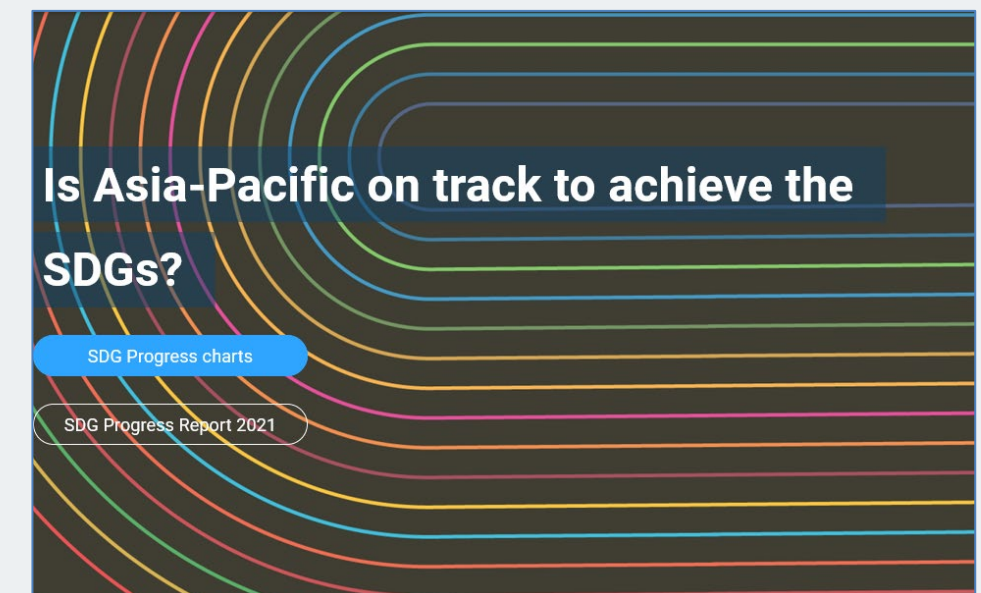


Figure 2.14 | Daily CO₂ emissions (Mt CO₂)

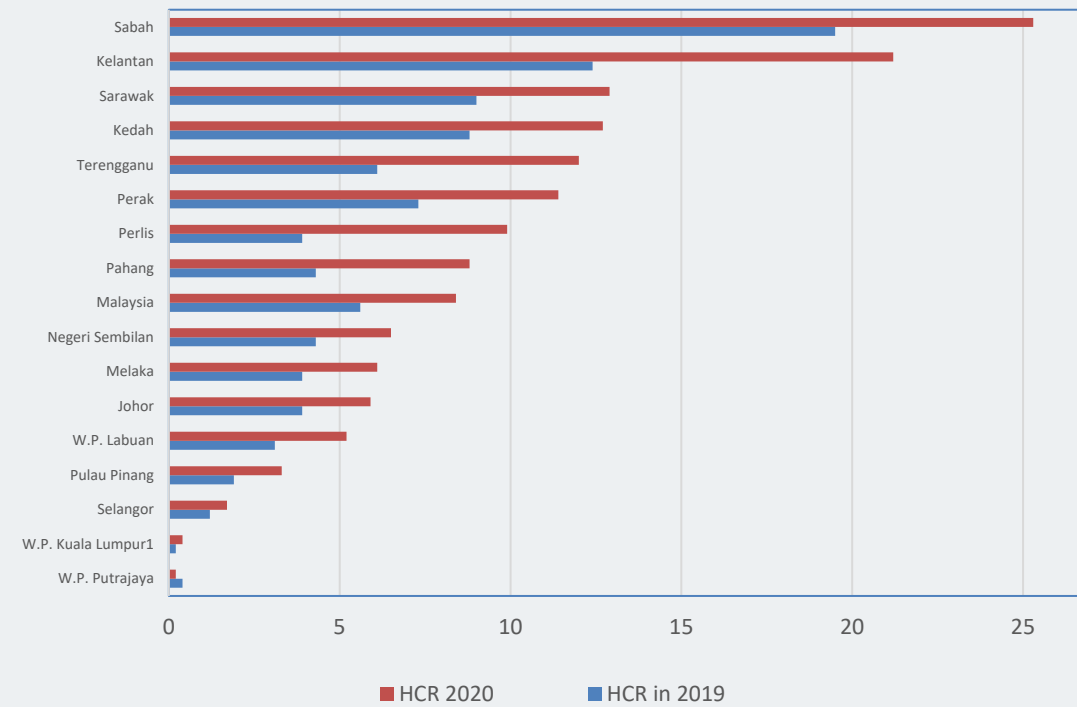


- **Two Sets of Sources**

- Malaysia
 - DOSM Dashboard <http://mysdg.dosm.gov.my/>
 - Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2021
- Regional
 - UN ESCAP SDG tracker
 - SDSN data base



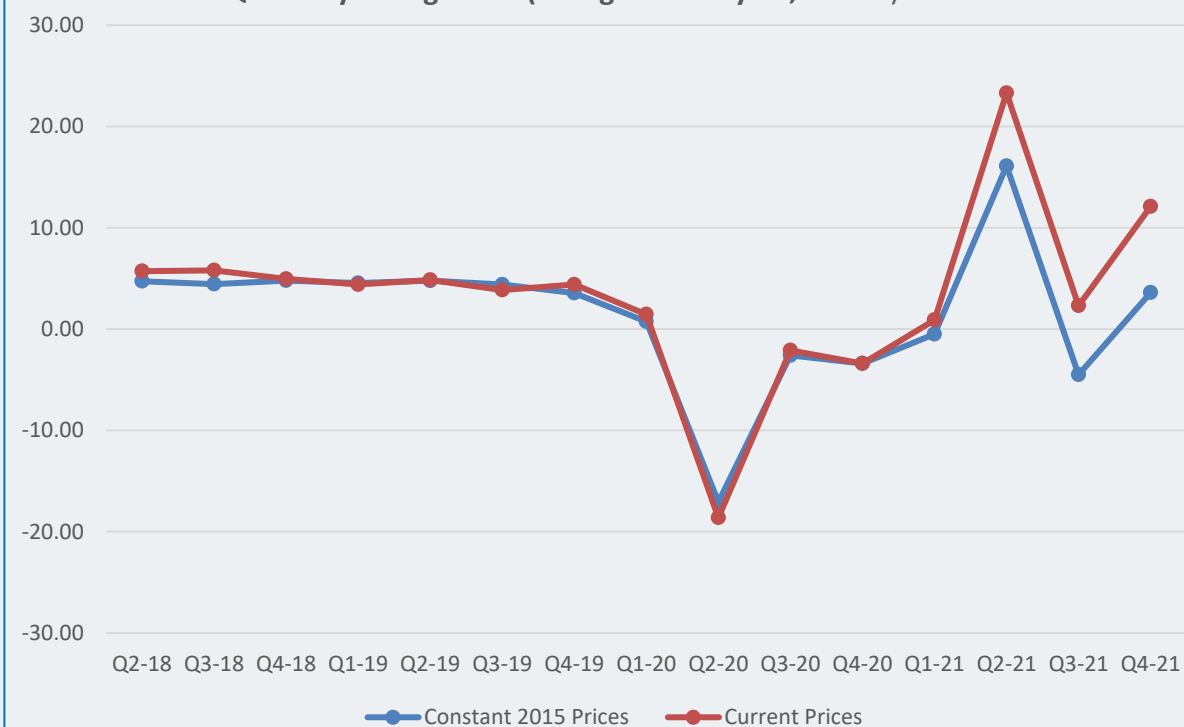
Poverty rate (%) by state, 2019 to 2020 (DOSM)



People

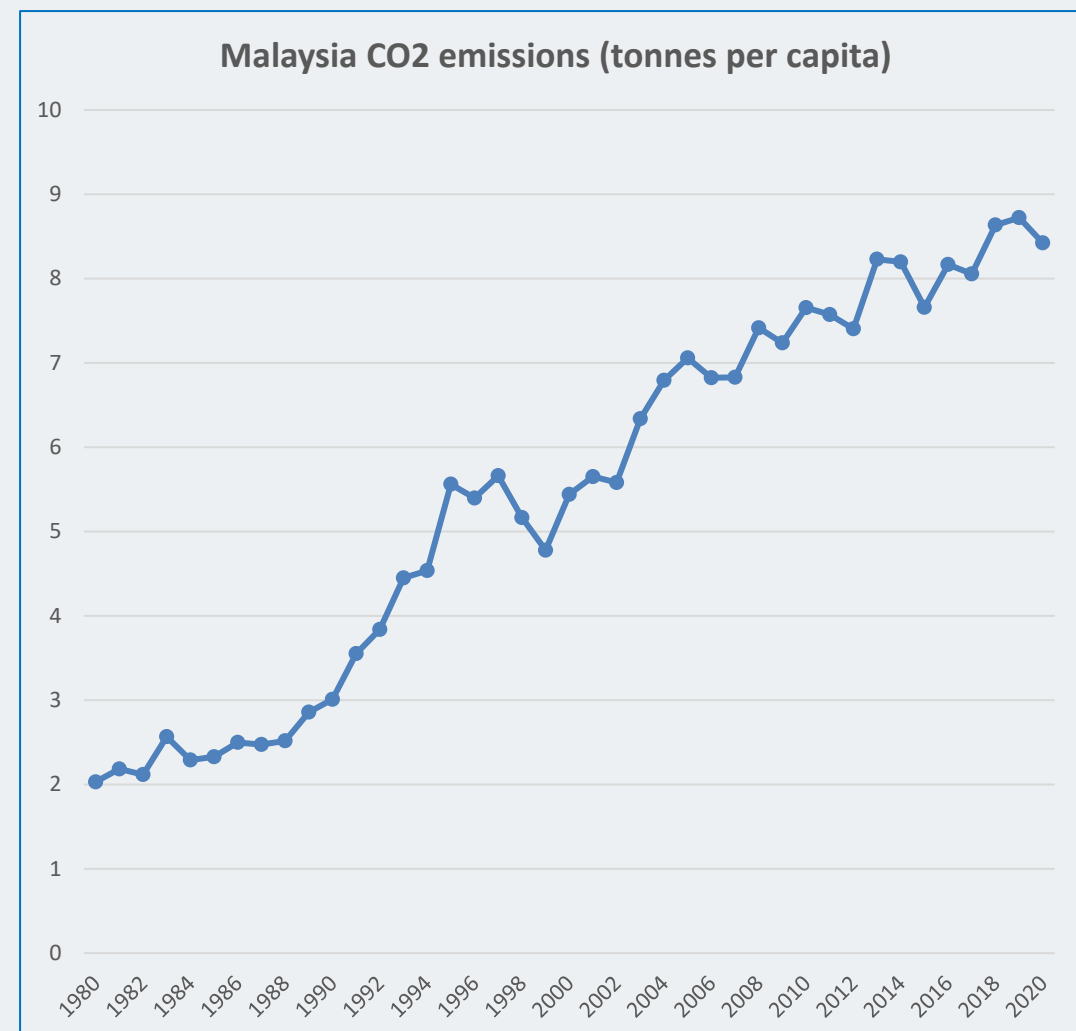
- Poverty/nutrition saw major reversals, sub-national picture more problematic
- Big impacts in health (Covid++). MCO closure of schools & other services.
- Improved social protection in policy response, but no lasting changes
- Neglected gender dimensions across SDGs

Quarterly GDP growth (change on last year, DOSM)



Prosperity

- Declines in growth post MCO and ongoing volatility. Strong “V shaped” recovery?
- Imbalances between sectors and questions over distribution/inclusion (groups and areas)



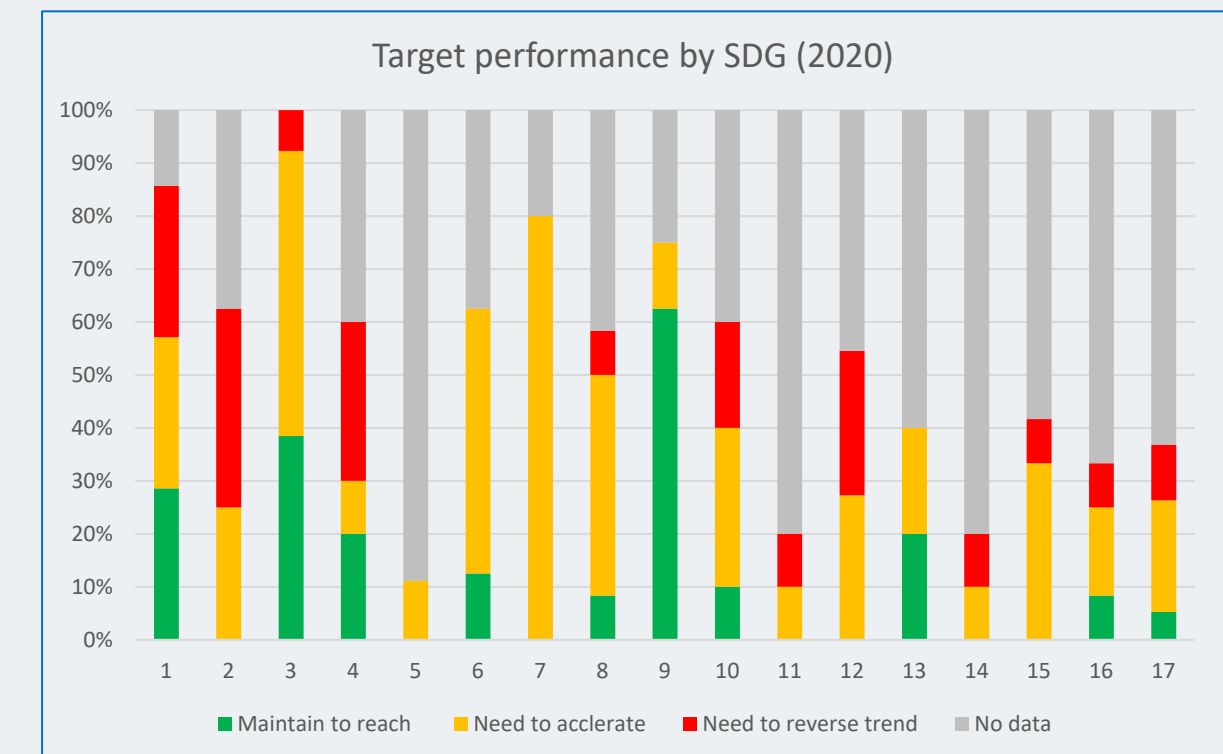
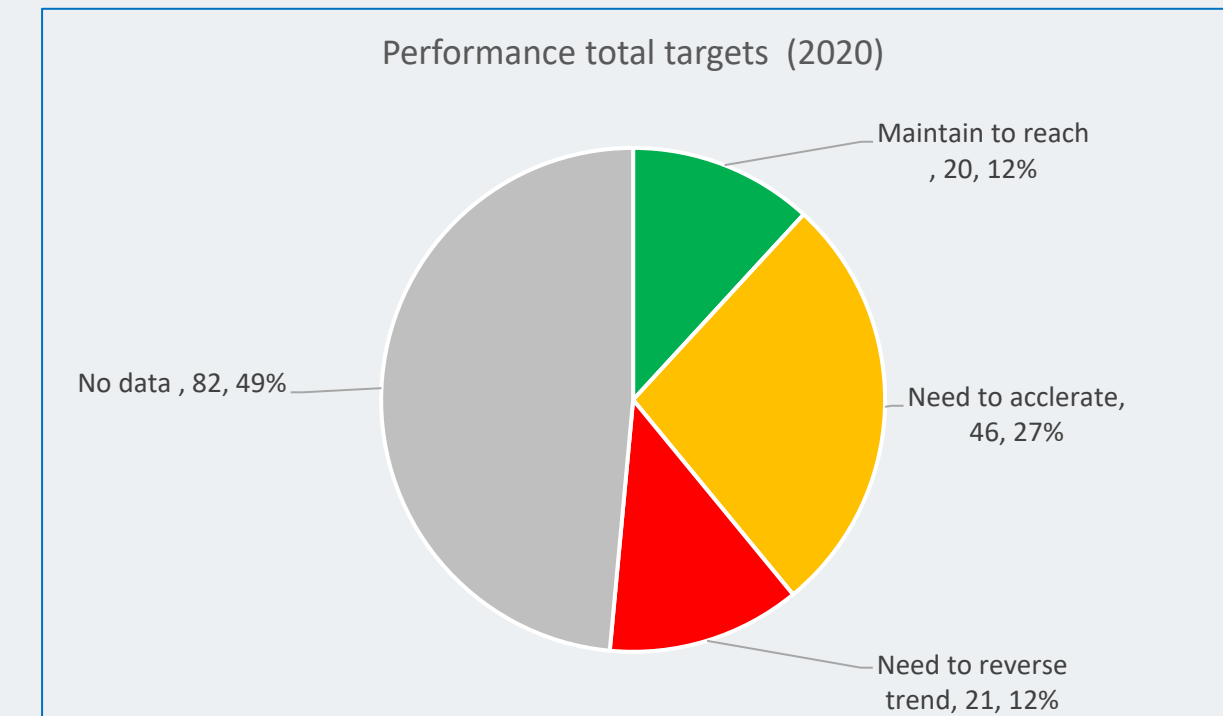
Planet

- Priorities as pre-pandemic - climate change, biodiversity loss, general degradation
- Adaptation efforts remain limited
- Preparedness to shocks, including natural hazards a major challenge
- Emissions reduced after MCO - a temporary interruption?

Peace

- Community cohesion placed under stress during pandemic, but Malaysians weathered the crisis well
- Covid response was generally inclusive, but historic issues around migrants, the undocumented, refugee stigmatization etc.
- Challenges to achieve effectiveness, transparency and accountability of institutions
- Human rights and LNOB key priorities for progress on all SDGs

- Dashboard shows mixed outcomes at target level:
 - Green (progress) – maintain to reach target, 12%
 - Yellow (off track) - needs acceleration, 27%
 - Red (regressing) – need to reverse trend, 12%
 - Grey (indicator missing) – no data, 49%
- Complex pattern at SDG level, very few showing unambiguous progress
- Stronger outcomes (green and yellow) on: (1) Poverty, (3) Health, (6) Clean water, (9) Industrialization
- Performance weak (red and yellow) on: (2) Hunger, (4) Education, (12) Responsible consumption & production
- Many missing SDG indicators (grey) – all goals, but especially: (5) Gender Equality, (11) Cities, (14) Oceans



Malaysia: Where we might be heading in the near term

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Need for caution, data not firm & much volatility in trajectory and geopolitical events

• People:

- Living standards will be squeezed, inflation is rising, unemployment is sluggish
- Post-Covid deficits in education & health will emerge

• Planet:

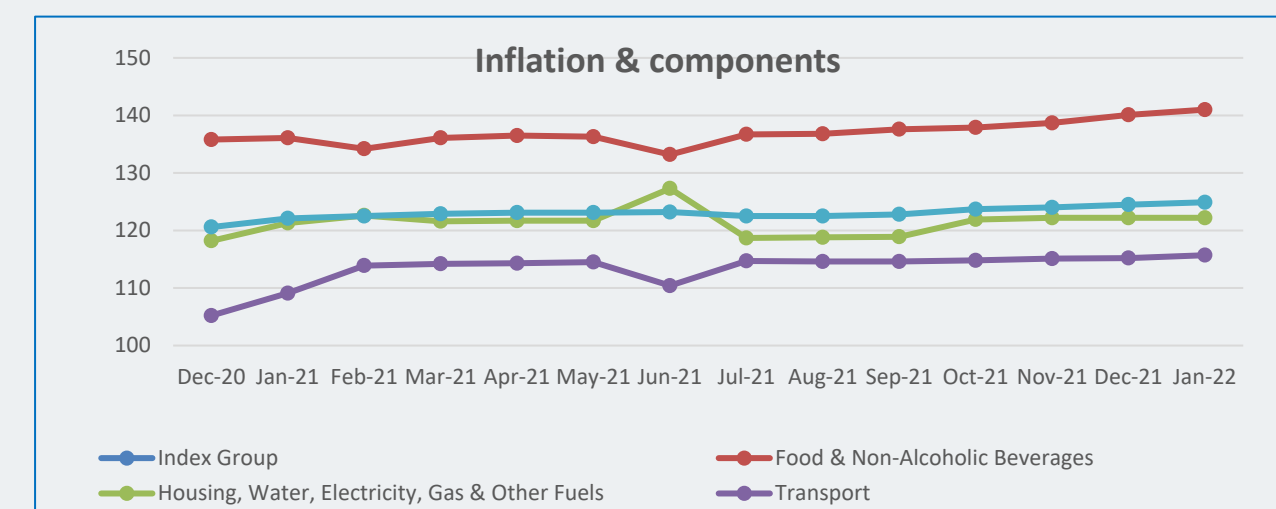
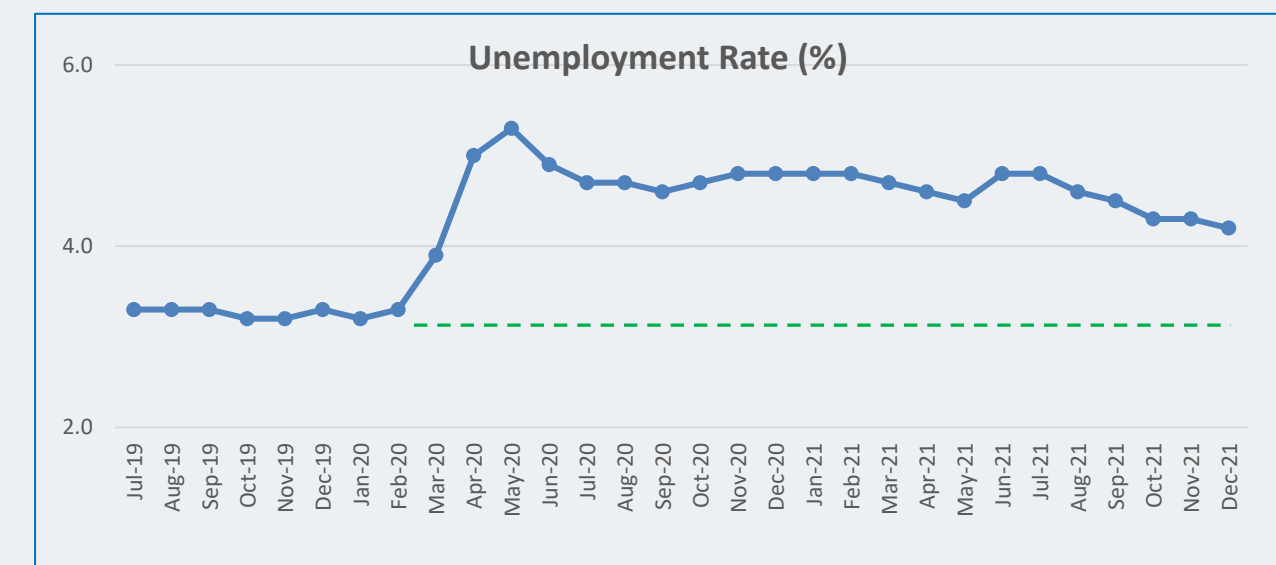
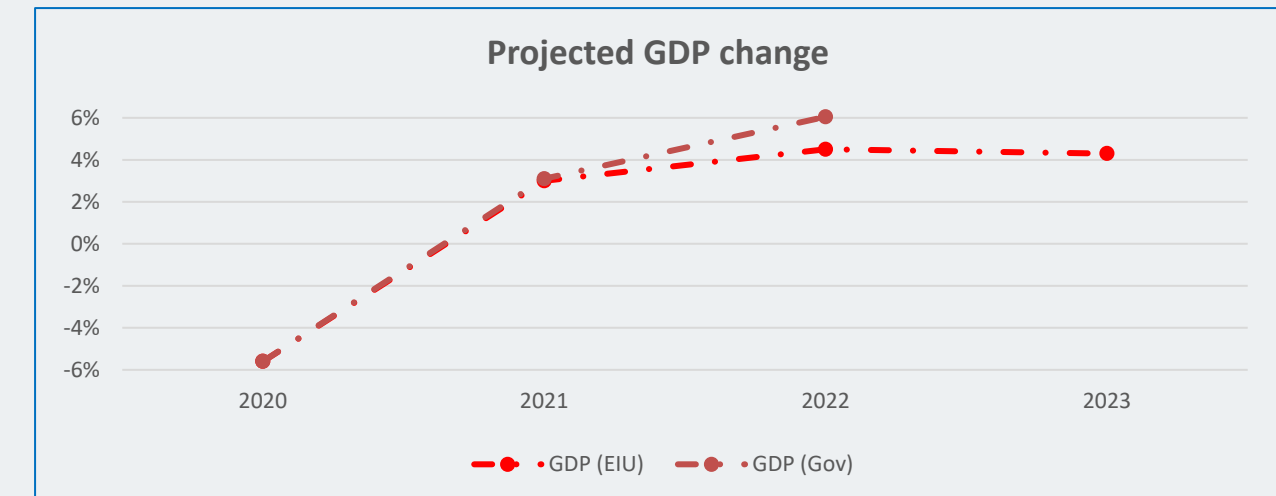
- Reassertion of pre-pandemic trends, growing emissions, worsening climate impacts
- No change, absent of significant policy shifts, some positive signals after COP26 within policy circles

• Prosperity:

- Recovery, but not as fast as assumed; will have fiscal implications. Danger of negative feedback
- Likely to be imbalanced (sectors, areas, groups) and non-inclusive without redistribution

• Peace:

- Continued political flux pre-elections, but recovery likely to support improved community cohesion



Malaysia: Government Policy Agenda

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• People:

- Address the social fallout of Covid-19, livelihoods, health, education
- Renewed focus on poverty reduction
- Reorient health system to Non-Communicable Diseases & public health, and tackle child nutrition
- Social protection reform, with a focus on administration and delivery technologies

• Prosperity:

- Recovery near & medium term, fiscal & monetary support. Re-establishing growth momentum and consolidate.
- Productivity agenda – investment in TVET/ human capital, labour market reforms, digitalization
- Rebalancing of the economy – addressing lagging regions – especially Sabah & Sarawak

• Planet:

- Mainstream climate & environment within all development policies, maintain forest cover, reduced emissions.
- Greater resilience, via investment in new infrastructure (tilt to adaptation?), especially in urban policy
- Major focus on the (green/ blue/ circular) economy - natural capital as a resource, a competitive advantage & link to technological innovation.

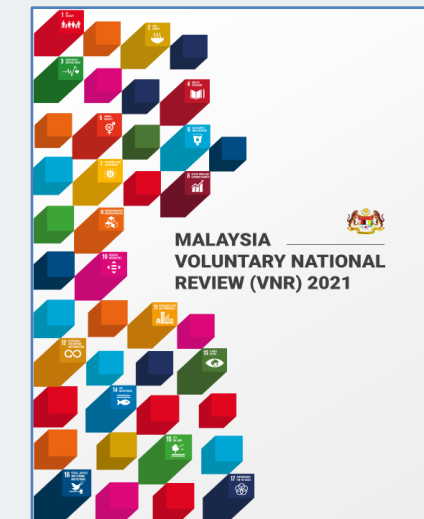


• Peace:

- Strengthening of national unity but alongside national security (?). Maintenance of bumiputras agenda.
- VNR: commitment to enhancing institutional transparency & accountability, bolstering human rights, addressing gender issues

• Partnership:

- Consultation with & delivery via others – CSOs, NGOs, the UN agencies, greater engagement with local governments



Global Imperatives from COVID-19

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- Decisively ending the pandemic, providing vaccine access to everyone everywhere, and restarting social & economic life, rapidly & equitably
- Importance of gathering more timely evidence & data for policymaking
- International policy coordination for reconvey, especially resourcing & fiscal responses, importance of “V” versus “U” versus “K” shaped recovery patterns
- Building forward better – technology, innovation, greater inclusion and environmental sustainability post Covid-19
- Gender equality and women’s empowerment
- Enhancing preparedness and building resilience to future risks
- Recognizing country/regional specifics and uncertainties, volatility and risks



Malaysia's path to 2030: a few entry points

- SDG performance, while good, could be much better. High SDG ambitions but policy response still falls somewhat short
- Need to tackle Malaysia's deeper, structural challenges and opportunities
- Need for policymakers to think of Malaysia in a different category and hold the country to higher targets & standards
- Invest in SDG Means of Implementation (financing arrangements, data deficits, coherent policy planning, partnership)
- Identify and prioritize SDG accelerators, those with higher impact across other targets
- Put less emphasis on economic targets & solutions, more on an integrated multidimensional approach
- Distributional & equity questions need attention
- Invest in administrative change & technological innovation, but focus more on structural reforms
- Empower and engage with people and communities, bring the SDG conversation and action to the subnational/local level
- **Empower women, celebrate their contribution to society and SDGs today and everyday!**

Thank you!



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