

## **MALAYSIA — Country Profile**

### **Overview**

Malaysia, a middle-income country is a federation of 13 states and three federal territories. The country is one of the vibrant Southeast Asian economies with a diverse, multiethnic, multicultural society. The Malays are the major ethnic group (67.4%), followed by the Chinese (24.6%), Indian (7.3%), and others (0.7%). Malaysia's population stands at 29.3 million in 2012. The average annual population growth rate has declined from 2.7% to 2.1%. It is projected that population will increase to 32.4 million in 2020.

In 2012, the female population comprised 14.2 million (48.5%) and the male population comprised 15.1 million (51.5%). Life expectancy at birth for men and women is measured at 72.3 and 77.2 years respectively. In 2012, the young population constituted about 26.4% of the total population. This is expected to decline to 24% by 2020. For the aging population, it will increase from 5.3% to 6.8%. In terms of health financing, government expenditure in health as a percentage of overall health expenditure has been in the 54-59% range.

Source: *extracted from Malaysia Country Profile*

### **Sexual and Reproductive Health**

Key findings from the *Malaysia Country Profile* on the situation of SRHR in Malaysia are as follows:

#### Maternal Health:

- Non-citizen undocumented women made up 10% of maternal death, mostly occurring in the state of Sabah.
- 98.6% of births were attended by skilled birth attendants.
- Antenatal visits increased to 94.0%.

#### Contraception:

- The total fertility rate in Malaysia is 2.1 since 2010.
- The total fertility rate is 2.7 for Malays, 1.5 for Chinese, and 1.6 for Indians.
- The decline in the total fertility rate is inversely proportional to the increasing number of female participation in the labor force, increasing from 46.1% to 49.5% in 2012.
- The contraceptive prevalence rate has been stagnant at 52% since 1984.
- Common modern methods in Peninsular Malaysia are oral pills, followed by female sterilization and the condom.
- The unmet need for contraception shows an increase from 25% to 36% in 2004.
- There is also a reported increase in the percentage of women reporting husband's objection to using contraception, from 8.0% to 12.6%.

#### Abortion:

- Based on statistical calculations, about 90,000 abortions (0.01% of the entire female population) are conducted annually.
- Death by abortion comprised of 0.5%.
- Irrespective of marital status, pregnancy termination services are offered at government health facilities.
- However, most adolescents are unaware of the availability of this service.
- According to the UN Abortion Policies and Reproductive Health around the World (2014), abortion is permitted to save a women's life, preserve a woman's physical health, and to preserve a woman's mental health.

#### HIV & AIDS:

- The HIV prevalence amongst the general population is less than 1%.
- However, the HIV prevalence amongst the most-at-risk population is 30%, consisting of injecting drug users, sex workers, men who have sex with men, transgender persons, and their intimate partners.
- The percentage of reported young people between 13-29 living with HIV is 26%.
- 89.4% of HIV positive pregnant women received antiretroviral treatment to reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission.
- In 2011, 228 infants borne by HIV positive women were given antiretroviral treatment, thus resulting in the prevention of 225 mother-to-child transmissions of HIV infections.

#### **Sexual and Reproductive Rights**

##### Child Early & Forced Marriage (CEFM):

- Sexual intercourse with a girl below the age of 16 years old is considered statutory rape, whether with her consent or not.
- However, child marriage is legally permissible under Syariah Law and Civil Law.
- 1,200 child marriages were approved by the Syariah Court in 2012.

##### Violence Against Women (VAW):

- A double-fold increase in sexual violence (rape) occurred over the span of 10 years, from 2000 to 2010.
- Domestic violence cases reported to the police indicate an average of 3,000 cases reported each year, although fear of social stigma suggests that this remains an underreported statistic.

#### **Current initiatives in Malaysia**

- ARROW and Federation of Reproductive Health Associations, Malaysia (FRHAM) continue to work towards **ICPD+25: Revitalising and implementing the Sexual and Reproductive Rights Agenda in the Asia Pacific Region**. This ICPD+25 monitoring and advocacy initiative aims to show the progress gaps and challenges towards ICPD implementation in Lao PDR. In-depth monitoring is currently underway on the state of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in Malaysia.