

**SUMMARY FOR THE DIALOGUE ON THE NEEDS OF AND CHALLENGES FACED BY INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES AND NEXT STEPS AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

NO.	ISSUES/ CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDATIONS
1	<p>Sustainability and Livelihood</p> <p>The Orang Asli are increasingly entering the formal and informal labour market, as self-employed workers or wage earners. They take up casual wage labour in plantation, as day labourers or farm workers. There are some who are self-employed engage in gathering and trading forest products, handicraft production and selling recyclables.</p> <p>Covid-19 is threatening the livelihood and the survival of the Orang Asli. The strict MCO have forced many Orang Asli to struggle to find food after their small income from daily sales of forest products, vegetables, fruits, and waged income from working in the plantations have been cut off. Some are fearful of going into towns to sell produce or buy food because of roadblocks, concerns of violating the MCO or catching the virus.</p> <p>The MCO have also affected the traditional livelihood of the Orang Asli, who relied heavily on the sale of non-timber forest products for food, shelter, medicine and cash income.</p>	<p>a) The Government should consider establishing post-MCO recovery funds and resources specifically aimed for Orang Asli needs, to support and re-establish their traditional livelihoods, economies and sustain their communities.</p>

	<p>Some Orang Asli have gone into the forest, to isolate and find food for themselves, to sustain themselves throughout the MCO. But the Orang Asli cannot rely on the forest for too long. The forest can only sustain Orang Asli for a short period, because of deforestation. Although these communities may be able to sustain their survival during the immediate period, forest resources have rapidly depleted, hence they can no longer rely on the forest to sustain their livelihood for many months to come. They need cash income to purchase essential items.</p>	
2	<p>Access to Government Food Aid Food given out by the Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA) was only delivered to registered villages. Orang Asli, especially those from the nomadic tribes are known to move and create new villages whenever their existing village becomes too dense or the natural resources are depleted. Due to this, some Orang Asli villages are not registered. Another problem is related to the outdated database used by JAKOA to determine aid distribution. JAKOA utilised data from 2017, and as such many aid-deserving families and villages, were excluded.</p> <p>Food aid provided by the Government is</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) JAKOA should update its database soonest possible. b) The Government should involve Orang Asli themselves in the aid management process. c) JAKOA should be transparent in its aid and development efforts.

	<p>insufficient and unequally distributed. NGOs have received several complaints that the value of each food packet is not equivalent to RM 100 as claimed by the Government.</p> <p>There were questions about transparency in the distribution of aid. The Government have stated that NGOs are not allowed to enter Orang Asli areas, but some NGOs reported that JAKOA had selectively brought in certain NGOs to deliver aid to the Orang Asli.</p>	
3	<p>Access to Bantuan Prihatin Nasional (BPN) 99% of the Orang Asli are in the B40 group. Given the high percentage of the Orang Asli in the B40 groups, technically every Orang Asli household is entitled to financial aid under the Economic Stimulus Package. NGOs are facing challenges to collect information from many Orang Asli villagers due to illiteracy and lack of supporting documentations such as marriage certificates and bank accounts. Orang Asli also faced challenges to register due to lack of awareness, unavailability of internet connections or inability to use online forms. The application procedures to <i>Bantuan Prihatin Nasional</i> is 'not Orang Asli friendly'.</p> <p>There are also issues of Orang Asli villagers inability to access to cash aid. Many have to travel far to town to withdraw money from the nearest bank. Most of the villagers do</p>	<p>a) The Government should ensure the automatic registration of Orang Asli as recipients of BPN.</p> <p>b) Orang Asli should be given an option to receive BPN by cash which is handed directly to them.</p>

	<p>not have proper transport and are afraid to travel for fear of breaking the MCO. To the Orang Asli, the MCO is a hidden cost that they cannot afford.</p>	
4	<p>Access to Healthcare Services Some Orang Asli villagers refuse to seek medical care due to fear of COVID-19.</p> <p>The Orang Asli are susceptible to risk because of their exposure to individuals distributing aid to them without proper protection. This puts the Orang Asli at risk of exposure to virus, as they are not well-protected with facemasks, gloves and sanitizers.</p>	<p>a) The Ministry of Health should shift its approach from reactionary to proactive and consider forming a working committee to include community participation in monitoring health needs and implementing interventions.</p> <p>b) The Government should implement programs to extend telecommunication services to remote areas so villagers may access medical information through smartphones and telemedicine services.</p> <p>c) MOH could include indigenous peoples' as recipients of PPE such as masks, gloves, disinfectant/sanitizers</p> <p>d) Several Orang Asli communities have imposed self-quarantine and established controls to limit access to their communities. These mechanisms should be respected and reinforced whenever appropriate.</p>
5	<p>Education Gap</p> <p>Many Orang Asli children have gone back into the forests, that resulted in them losing contact with their schools.</p> <p>In villages where options to deliver education is possible, teachers, however, are unable to teach due to the MCO and limited</p>	<p>a) Ministry of Education could ensure access to education for Orang Asli children and youth by providing necessary tools for remote learning, in close cooperation with teachers and JAKOA.</p> <p>b) Financial support should be provided for every Orang Asli child and youth to return to schools and colleges/higher learning institutions.</p>

	<p>spaces COVID-19 have pushed education online. The Orang Asli children in rural areas, are caught in internet and broadband gap. Children are not able to access online courses due to lack of electricity and connectivity, poor online teaching and learning facilities, and many could not afford handphone or data line.</p> <p>It is a struggle for most Orang Asli families to pay for expenses in order for their children to return to schools and hostels, including travel, hostel fees, materials needed for school, as they have experienced severe economic loss.</p>	
6	<p>Trust Deficit towards JAKOA There is a serious trust deficit towards JAKOA, amongst the Orang Asli.</p>	<p>a) The Government should include Orang Asli representatives in emergency and health response committees or any entity dedicated to the COVID 19 pandemic, both during the outbreak as well as in the aftermath.</p> <p>b) JAKOA should respect the right of Orang Asli to free, prior, and informed consent in the prevention, development, implementation, and monitoring of measures to address COVID-19.</p>
7	<p>Delivery of Information on COVID-19 The Orang Asli practices a communal social system which makes social distancing very difficult. This creates vulnerabilities for the community should a positive COVID case be introduced into the village.</p>	<p>a) The Government should design an early warning system to identify health threats to help communities prepare adequately.</p> <p>b) MOH and JAKOA provide relevant information and accompanying audiovisual materials to Orang Asli, as well as efforts to support the translation and dissemination of the</p>

	<p>The Orang Asli were not given prior notice about the MCO. Many rushed to the forest for safety and survival</p>	<p>information in different Orang Asli languages.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Women and Children Issues Globally and nationally, there is a serious concern about reports of domestic violence as a result of the movement restriction and families confined at home for long periods.</p> <p>There are concerns that Orang Asli women and children may be exposed to the risk of domestic violence and sexual abuse.</p> <p>There is also concern about aid to the Orang Asli. There are calls for aid to be gender-sensitive, to cater for needs of women and children. Besides providing food and financial support, aid must also include sanitary products for women and nutritious food for children.</p>	<p>a) The government should ensure that assistance extended to Orang Asli communities would include provision of psychosocial support and assistance, and the creation of safe spaces for any member of the Orang Asli community to come forward and get help.</p>