

Malaysians not so happy as before, says UN report
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Malaysians are no longer as happy as before, said a report released by the United Nations on Monday.

The country dropped in its ranking from 51st place to 56th in the World Happiness Report 2013 - the second report of its kind. The first report was released last year.

This has put Malaysia behind Southeast Asian neighbours Singapore (30) and Thailand (36), but ahead of Indonesia (76). Last year, Singapore was ranked 33, Thailand (52) and Indonesia (83). See graphics below.

Denmark was found to be the happiest country in the world, scoring 7.693 in the Cantril ladder - a measure using respondents' evaluation of their lives by imagining life as a ladder; the best possible life as a 10, and the worst possible life as a zero.

Malaysia scored 5.760 in the Cantril ladder, declining 0.377 points from last year's report. Forty countries dropped in their Cantril ladder scale while 60 countries improved.

However, the survey does not give specific details about each country's results.

This year's report, based on survey responses received from 2010 until 2012 from 156 countries, was published by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) ahead of the United Nations General Assembly in two weeks time, comparing different happiness measurements worldwide to create a "life evaluation score".

GDP per capita, years of healthy life expectancy, social support (having someone to count on in times of trouble), perception of corruption, prevalence of generosity and freedom to make life choices were identified as factors for each country's happiness level.

The report noted several trends in the results, including the world has become slightly happier and more generous in the last five years and that happiness (as measured by citizens' own evaluations of their lives) significantly improved in 60 countries and worsened in 41.

"This report offers rich evidence that the systematic measurement and analysis of happiness can teach us much about ways to improve the world's well-being and sustainable development," said Columbia University's Earth Institute director Jeffrey D. Sachs, who also edited the report.

"There is now a rising worldwide demand that policy be more closely aligned with what really matters to people as they themselves characterise their lives," he added. - September 13, 2013.

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