PRESS RELEASE

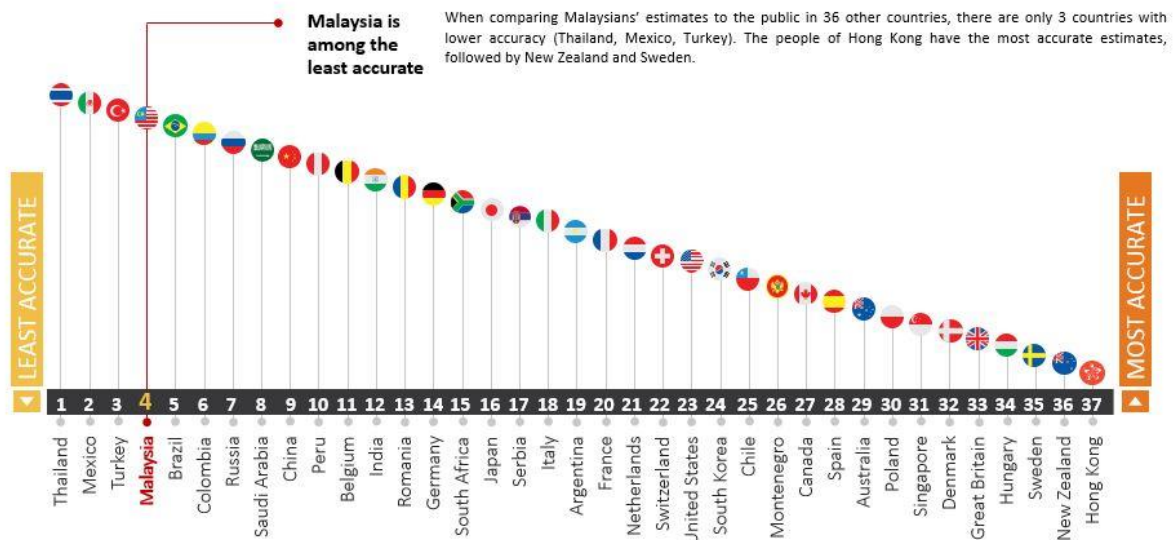## 18th December 2018 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LATEST IPSOS STUDY

Perils of Perception 2018

Global study highlights our misperceptions about the economy, population, the environment and other key issues. Ipsos' latest Perils of Perception study shows which key facts the online public[1] in Malaysia and 36 other countries get right about their society – and which they get wrong. Now in its fifth year, the survey aims to highlight how we're wired to think in certain ways and how our environment influences our (mis)perceptions.

Malaysians didn't quite get it right, and tend to be over apprehensive.

*Ranking on the **misperceptions index**:*

Malaysia is among the least accurate

When comparing Malaysians' estimates to the public in 36 other countries, there are only 3 countries with lower accuracy (Thailand, Mexico, Turkey). The people of Hong Kong have the most accurate estimates, followed by New Zealand and Sweden.

LEAST ACCURATE / MOST ACCURATE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37

Thailand, Mexico, Turkey, **Malaysia**, Brazil, Colombia, Russia, Saudi Arabia, China, Peru, Belgium, India, Romania, Germany, South Africa, Japan, Serbia, Italy, Argentina, France, Netherlands, Switzerland, United States, South Korea, Chile, Montenegro, Canada, Spain, Australia, Poland, Singapore, Denmark, Great Britain, Hungary, Sweden, New Zealand, Hong Kong

The index is constructed from the average gap between estimates and reality across all the topics evaluated.
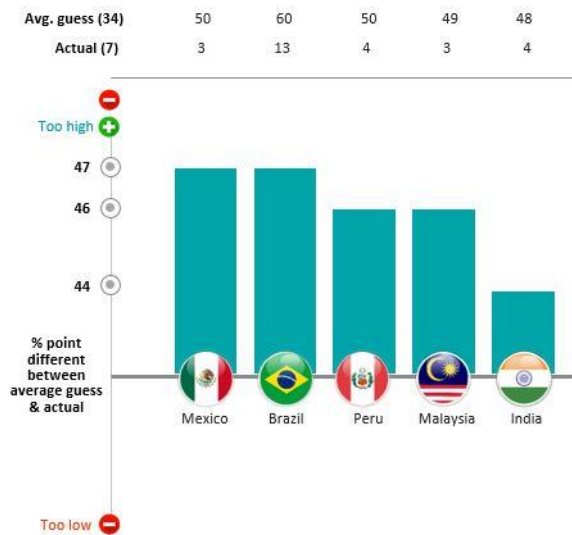
Economy

- Malaysians are among the least accurate in terms of **overestimating the proportion of fellow countrymen who are unemployed and seeking work**. On average, Malaysians estimate that half of Malaysia (49%) are unemployed and looking for work, with the actual figure being as low as 3% (46% gap). Malaysians are not alone though; across the globe unemployment figures are heavily overestimated, with an average perception gap of 34%.

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[1] Interviews carried out online with adults aged under 65. In countries with a low level of internet penetration, the sample will reflect a more urban, educated, and higher income profile than the general population

- The concern about unemployment is largely in line with the findings in Ipsos' "What Worries Malaysia" monthly survey, which shows that 34% of Malaysians see unemployment as one of the top three problems the country is facing (only corruption, crime & violence are seen as bigger problems).
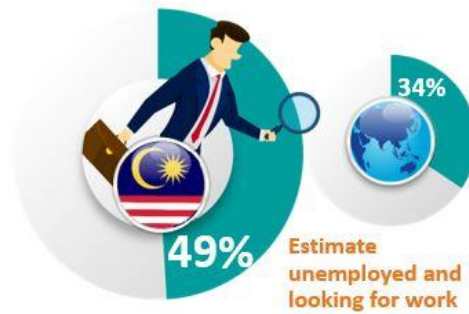
Q. Out of every 100 people of working age in [COUNTRY], about how many do you think are unemployed and looking for work?

	Mexico	Brazil	Peru	Malaysia	India
Avg. guess (34)	50	60	50	49	48
Actual (7)	3	13	4	3	4

- People tend to underestimate the size of their country's economy relative to others, **and Malaysia is no exception,** with an estimation that the country's economy is ranked 120 out of the almost 200 countries in the world, while the actual ranking is 37. We are in good company though, with Americans estimating their economy to be only the 5th largest, and the Chinese estimating their economy to be the 12th largest. The US and China have the world's first and second largest economies, respectively.

Climate change

- **Malaysians strongly overestimate the share of the country's energy that comes from renewable sources**. The average guess puts the renewable share at 39%, while the reality is only 5%. That's a perception gap of 34%, much higher than the global average of 8%, and higher than any other country surveyed.

Q. What percentage of total energy consumed in [COUNTRY] comes from renewable sources? Renewable sources can be defined as those that are not depleted when used, such as wind or solar power.

|	Malaysia	Saudi Arabia	China	Singapore	Belgium
Avg. guess (26)	39	28	36	23	26
Actual (18)	5	<1	12	1	9

- 17 of the past 18 years have been the hottest ever recorded. Every country, however, has underestimated the global temperature rise over the past 18 years with average estimate across being 9 years. Malaysians are marginally better, estimating 10 of the past 18 years have been the hottest.

Population

- Malaysia greatly overestimates the levels of **growth of its elderly population.** The average guess is that 57% of the population will be above 65 years old 2050, while the actual projection is only 16%. All other countries overestimate their future elderly population, although none to the same degree as Malaysians.

Q: Now thinking about 2050, out of every 100 people in [COUNTRY], about how many do you think will be over 65, according to projections by the World Bank?
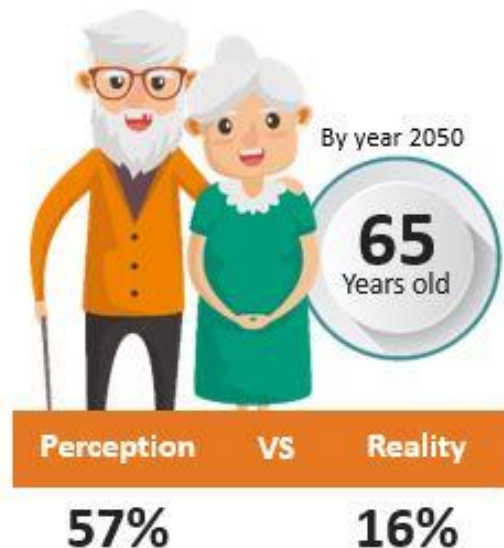
- It is also common for people in all parts of the world to overestimate both the immigrant and the Muslim share of the population. In Malaysia's case, the perception gap for immigration is 27% (36% perception vs 9% actual), while when it comes to guessing the Muslim share of population, Malaysians are fairly accurate compared to the rest of the world.

Arun Menon, Managing Director, Ipsos Malaysia:

- *"Ipsos' global Perils of Perceptions study shows that, around the world, people overestimate the real extent of social issues. This applies just as much to Malaysia – as we tend to be apprehensive about social and economic issues.*

- *Malaysians believing that half of the population is currently unemployed and that majority are going to be 65+ when we reach 2050, shows the extend of our overestimation, irrespective of the facts.*

   There are many different reasons why we are far from social and economic facts. These can include external influences on us, such as what we hear in the media or emphasised in online platforms, but our own internal biases are just as important. These biases include the tendency to focus more on negative stories.

- *Misperceptions can be a very useful pointer to people's real concerns. It also means that trying to correct this by only repeating the facts is unlikely to work - instead policy makers and media need to engage the public on the real emotional reasons that are driving these misperceptions".*

Technical note:

These are the findings of the Ipsos MORI Perils of Perception Survey 2018. 28,115 interviews were conducted between 28th September – 16th October 2018.

The survey is conducted in 37 countries around the world, via the Ipsos Online Panel system in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong (SAR, China), Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey and the USA. The following countries used either online or face-to-face methodologies: Montenegro, Serbia.

Approximately 1000 individuals aged 16-64 or 18-64 were surveyed in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Mexico, Montenegro, Serbia, Singapore, Spain and the USA. Approximately 2000 individuals aged 16-64 were surveyed in Japan. Approximately 500 individuals aged 16-64 were surveyed in Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Hungary, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and Turkey.

21 of the 37 countries surveyed online generate nationally representative samples in their countries (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong (SAR, China), Hungary, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and United States).

Brazil, Columbia, China, Chile, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, South Africa, Thailand and Turkey produce a national sample that is more urban & educated, and with higher incomes than their fellow citizens. We refer to these respondents as "Upper Deck Consumer Citizens". They are not nationally representative of their country.

The "actual" data for each question is taken from a variety of verified sources. The most recent available data has been used which in most cases is from the past two years. Figures for sexual harassment are largely from a 2012 study for the EU Fundamental Rights Agency and some country data for the Muslim population is from pre-2015. A full list of sources/links to the actual data can be found here.

Where results do not sum to 100 or the 'difference' appears to be+-1 more/less than the actual, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of don't knows or not stated responses.

Data are weighted to match the profile of the population.