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For Immediate Release

Empowering Tomorrow: SERI Hosts Engaging Roundtable on Malaysian Youth Perspectives on AI in Kuala Lumpur

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – October 24, 2023 – Social & Economic Research Initiative (SERI) hosted a pivotal event yesterday at the EQ Hotel, bringing together stakeholders to discuss the perspectives of Malaysian youths on the future of artificial intelligence (AI). Titled "Shaping Futures: Malaysian Youths Perspectives on Artificial Intelligence," the event gathered ministry and government bodies, industry leaders, educators, and youth representatives to explore the implications of AI on the next generation.

Dr. Jasmine Begum, Director of Legal, Corporate & Government Affairs for ASEAN and New Markets at Microsoft (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, delivered the opening remarks, highlighting that this partnership with SERI aims to foster dialogue and drive awareness of these critical issues, ensuring that the voices of young women and vulnerable communities are included in the future of AI policy development.

She also highlighted that one of the biggest challenges we face with AI is its impact on young people, especially in the Global South. "As we transition from analog to digital policies, there's a significant gap in understanding how outdated policies fail to address the needs of today's youth. This gap disproportionately affects vulnerable communities, necessitating the creation of progressive, digital-first policies," Dr. Jasmine said.

The report highlights several key points regarding youth and AI in Malaysia: while young people are extensively using AI for learning, they face challenges due to its limited acceptance in both public and private universities, with many citing a lack of guidelines or outright rejection from lecturers and faculties. Additionally, these youths are acutely aware of ethical and legal concerns surrounding AI, including issues related to misuse, data privacy, cultural and language diversity, authenticity, algorithmic fairness, moderation, accountability, over-reliance, intellectual property, and age restrictions for usage. Despite the existence of comprehensive policies and programs, such as the National AI Roadmap and Generative AI guidelines, their weak implementation and communication to the youth demographic hinder their effectiveness.

The presentation was delivered by Nur Sakinah, Senior Researcher at SERI, who provided an insightful overview of the qualitative study on Malaysian youths' perspectives on AI. She touched on youths' awareness and usage of AI, gender gap in AI, youths' concerns on AI, future outlook on AI and communication gap in policy delivery.

A roundtable discussion followed, featuring a diverse group of experts from various organizations, including Microsoft Malaysia, Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Digital Malaysia, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, Dean of AI Faculty from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, and Youths representative. This collaborative dialogue centered on the challenges and opportunities presented by AI, highlighting the importance of inclusive policies that reflect the perspectives of young Malaysians.

The event concluded with a Q&A session, allowing attendees to engage directly with the panelists and share their perspectives on AI's role in shaping their futures. with closing remarks at 12:20 PM, after which attendees enjoyed refreshments and continued networking.

SERI is a non-partisan think-tank dedicated to the promotion of evidence-based policies that address issues of inequality. For more information, please visit www.seri.my or email us at hello@seri.my.