

**UNSD-ASEAN MEETING ON THE 2010 ROUND OF POPULATION AND  
HOUSING CENSUS  
Siem Reap, Cambodia, 31 July – 2 August 2006**

**MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE**

**BY**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) has had a long experience in undertaking national population and housing censuses, apart from her responsibility of collecting, interpreting and disseminating other fields of statistics. The Population and Housing Censuses of Malaysia were conducted for the years 1970, 1980, 1991 and 2000. The 2000 Population and Housing Census was the fourth decennial census undertaken since the formation of Malaysia in 1963. The forthcoming Population and Housing Census of Malaysia will be conducted in 2010. The legal basis for undertaking the census is provided for by the Census Act 1960 (Revised 1969).

1.2 A population and housing census provides the principal means of data collection aimed at providing a comprehensive set of statistical

information on population and housing. In this respect, the Population and Housing Census of Malaysia provides a wealth of information on the number of persons and households together with a wide range of their demographic, social and economic characteristics. In addition, information on the number of living quarters by type, structural characteristics and the availability of amenities are also available. Data from the census also provide inputs for planning, formulation and implementation of government policies and programmes. Apart from this, the census data is also widely used by businesses, industry analysts, academicians and researchers as well as private individuals.

## **2. EXPERIENCE WITH 2000 CENSUS**

### **2.1 OVERVIEW**

2.1.1 The most recent Population and Housing Census for Malaysia was undertaken in July 2000. The main objective of the census was to provide a wealth set of information on the number of persons and households together with a wide range of demographic, social and economic characteristics at small geographical levels. The data was used extensively in the preparation and monitoring of the Five-Year Malaysia Plans particularly the Eighth Malaysia Plan (2001 – 2005).

2.1.2 The Chief Statistician of Malaysia was appointed the Commissioner of Census and responsible for the entire 2000 Census planning, operation and implementation. The Commissioner was assisted by two teams of officials, one located in the headquarters in Kuala Lumpur and the other was at the state and district levels.

- 2.1.3 Mapping work for the 2000 Census began as early as July 1998 and completed in April 2000. The main objective of mapping is to provide the latest information on the census frame to enable enumerators to carry out their task in a timely and precise manner. The operational work involved in relation to updating the maps was fully carried out by the state branch offices.
- 2.1.4 The *de jure* approach was adopted for the first time in the 2000 Census whereby all persons on Census Day (5<sup>th</sup> July 2000) were enumerated according to their place of usual residence. Enumeration was undertaken during the period of 5<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> July 2000. All persons including foreigners who had stayed or intended to stay in Malaysia for six months or more in the year 2000 were included in the Census.
- 2.1.5 Publicity campaigns for the 2000 Census began at the end of 1998 with the extensive use of publicity materials such as electronic media, printing media, distribution materials such as posters, calendar, car stickers, billboard, stamps and first day covers as well as website coverage. In general, the publicity programmes was aimed at creating public awareness.
- 2.1.6 The data processing for the 2000 Census involves manual and computer processing and was decentralized. A total of 13 processing centers were set up and they were linked via local area network and wide area network.
- 2.1.7 One method of evaluating census results was through a post enumeration survey known as Census Coverage Evaluation Survey (CCES) which was carried out from 7<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> August 2000. The

results obtained from this survey were used to evaluate and adjust the census population data for under-enumeration.

2.1.8 The census results were disseminated in the form of published data and non-published tables. Published data can be obtained in report form (publication) or CD-ROM or diskettes. The census results were also disseminated through the Department's website. In addition, census data can also be retrieved through the census database (InfoCEN), Geographical Information System (GIS) and monographs.

## **2.2 IMPROVEMENTS IN THE 2000 CENSUS**

2.2.1 The cumulative experience of past censuses can be of great help in the preparation of the 2000 Census. A proper recording of such experiences in an administrative and technical report provides valuable information and ideas for future census takers.

2.2.2 The development of GIS in the Department which started as early as in 1989 played a great role in carrying out the census successfully. As the census involves a large data set, the ability of GIS system to capture, store, retrieve, analyze and display spatial information greatly enhanced the usage of census data. For the 2000 Census, the enhancement of GIS technology and facilities in the Department has given many added advantages.

2.2.3 The extensive use of information technology (IT) during the 2000 Census helped to expedite census data processing. Data handling and verification were made through decentralized micro computer system and localized LAN. The clean census data were then channeled from the state processing centre to headquarters via

STATS\*net from the nearest regional office. The approach taken has helped to expedite the preparation of preliminary data.

2.2.4 Coverage of new topics in the 2000 Census provides additional information to users especially the main central government agencies. Among the new items canvassed in the latest census include:

- Year of first arrival in Malaysia for foreigners
- Field of study (technical/tertiary)
- Household ownership/rental
- Household items/amenities such as:
  - Cellular phones
  - Personal computer
  - Internet access
  - Microwave

2.2.5 New ways and methods of data dissemination had also given advantage to users of census data. The development of census database known as InfoCEN has enable data retrieval and accessibility more friendly and easy.

2.2.6 The use of *de jure* approach in population enumeration was more viable as it is most suited in terms of analysis of households as well as migration since both essentially rely on the concept of usual place of residence. A count of the usual resident population provides a more rational basis for the purpose of development planning and other uses such as in the apportionment of legislative seats and distribution of state funds.

## **2.3 WEAKNESSES OF THE 2000 CENSUS**

- 2.3.1 One important aspect that can be analyzed is pertaining to enumeration strategies. In this context, the design of the questionnaire played a vital role in census undertaking. A long census questionnaire affect the timeliness of data processing. A simpler form with proper instructions/guides to fill up will ease enumeration exercise. A simplified version of the questionnaire should have been developed to cater for self-enumeration for certain areas in the country especially in certain towns or cities such as condominiums and other secured housing complexes.
- 2.3.2 In the 2000 Census, the manual data processing was still being used to a certain extent whereby the processing centres were responsible for manual editing, coding, quality control and data capture.
- 2.3.3 The recruitment of temporary staff to undertake census enumerations could also affect data quality to certain extent as these people were inexperienced in the field as well as subject matter concepts.

## **3. PLANNING WORK FOR 2010 CENSUS**

- 3.1 The Department of Statistics, Malaysia (DOSM) will undertake the fifth Population and Housing Census in 2010. DOSM has started the planning process in the beginning of 2006.
- 3.2 Preparatory work undertaken for the 2010 Census includes the following:

- Formation of working and technical groups to look into areas of improvement .
- Drawing up timetable of activities to be undertaken for the period 2006 – 2012.
- Preparation of Census Budget.
- Enhancement of mapping work and improving the Census Frame by further development of the GIS system.
- Planning for better enumeration strategy and approach, improvement of questionnaire design and collection methods.
- Proposed introducing self-enumeration method whereby enumerators will visit the houses during listing period and leave the form to the respondents to fill up. The completed form can then be mailed back to the Department or the enumerators will revisit to collect them.
- Introduced an internet based approach of enumeration.
- Improve on the training methods for supervisors and enumerators and give more emphasis on the procedure in filling up census questionnaire. Training documents needs to be prepared and dispatched quickly. Technical Support Unit needs to be set up to assist during training to both supervisors and enumerators.
- Planning for better publicity using latest technology.
- Proposed to outsource publicity to professionals.
- Enhancing data processing work by utilizing fully automated data processing and developing the intergrated data management system in line with the recommendations set forth by the Department's ICT Strategic Plan.
- DOSM is also looking into the possibilities of using ICR, imaging, internet and hand held devices for the future census.