

CENSUS CHIEF'S COMMENTS UNCALLED FOR (THE SUN, 20 AUGUST 2010, LETTERS)

Population and Housing Census is conducted every ten years. The previous census was in 2000. Census 2010 is the fifth census since the formulation of Malaysia in 1963. Among the objectives of the census are for planning, formulation and implementation of government policies and programs. Apart from this, the census data are also widely used by business communities, research institutions and individuals. Census data is also used as input to population projection.

The widespread publicity had been carried out by the Department through internet, broadcast and print media. As for the Chinese Community, articles were printed in the Chinese newspapers such as China Press, Guang Ming, Sin Chiew Daily, Nanyang Siang Pau and Oriental Daily and electronic media broadcasting such as in program What Say You (TV2), AiFM (Radio) and other radio stations. A discussion with the Federation of Chinese Association which represents the Chinese community was held to seek the community's cooperation.

Initially, the response from the Chinese community was poor due to the fear that information collected during the census will be divulged to other parties. However, the response improved where the Department ensures the confidentiality of the data as stipulated under the Census Act 1960:

- Individual data in the questionnaire is confidential and will not be divulged to any other parties
- Only aggregated data will be published

The issue of data quality has always been given high priority. In this context, certain steps are undertaken by the Department to ensure high quality census data, among others are:

- a. all questionnaire will be scrutinised for completeness and consistency and in addition, quality checks will be undertaken to ensure that data collected are of quality; and

- b. a special survey known as Census Coverage Enumeration Survey will be carried out from August until early October to evaluate the quality of the data obtained during the census.

We appreciate the effort of the complainant in highlighting the issues and we thank him for sharing his opinions.

ISMAIL YUSOFF

Deputy Commissioner
for Commissioner

Population and Housing Census, Malaysia 2010