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Foreword

In commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Department of Statistics, the theme chosen is “**Department of Statistics, Malaysia: 60 years Generating National Statistics**”. The department has organised several activities to celebrate the anniversary and the main highlight is the National Statistical Conference 2009.

During the conference, the first Chief Statistician, Malaysia presented the paper entitled “**Effective National Statistical System Essential Requirements**”. His paper, as presented in this journal, highlights the main social, economic and environmental concerns that are exceedingly complex, multi-faceted and pose challenges to the very foundations of the capitalist system. Rational policy development and decision making based on quantitative measures demand the availability of a strong and healthy statistical system that is capable of supporting effective responses. Most advanced countries have moved ahead each having a good functioning statistical system. Notwithstanding, Malaysia has made considerable progress in developing the features of a good functioning statistical system and incorporate them into the governance framework of its system.

The second article examines the relationship between the economic and social development among ethnic groups across geographical areas in Malaysia by using the Social Accounting Matrix (SAM). In 1970 the first SAM for Malaysia was developed and it focused mainly on the design and construction of economic framework for Malaysia in terms of economic performance, employment and income distribution which provide a suitable base for analysis and policy making. Due to its importance, SAM for reference year 2005 is compiled as one of the tools to facilitate preparation of the 10th Malaysia Plan.

Challenges in compiling the environmental statistics are explained in the third article. This article highlights the experience and challenges faced by DOS in the compilation of environment statistics. The challenges include data availability, timeliness, data gaps and differences in classification.

The fraternities of the Department of Statistics are highly encouraged to continue contributing articles to the journal as this does not only enrich the statistical knowledge and analytical skills, but also to share various subjects on statistics with the users. The insights provided by the articles, will hopefully enhance the readers’ knowledge on the reading and interpretation of statistics.

OMI KELSOM ELIAS,
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Contents

Effective National Statistical Systems:
- Essential Requirements

Datuk Ramesh Chander
D.I.M.P, J.M.N.

Achieving Social Accounting Matrix for
Malaysia Through Distribution of Income

Jamia Aznita Jamal and
Ismail Abdul Rahman

Challenges in the Compilation of Environment
Statistics in Malaysia

Lim Soh Wah
