

CONVERSATIONS

# 27 million and counting

Chief Statistician and Census Commissioner Datuk Wan Ramlah Wan Abdul Raof briefs NATALIE HENG on the 5th Population and Housing Census.

## When will the census be conducted?

From July 6 to Aug 22, 29,000 enumerators will be given a map to visit each and every one of 7.5 million living quarters, which can include anything from shacks to bungalows.

## Who is included?

Everyone living in the country, that includes Malaysian citizens and foreigners whether they are here legally or illegally.

## What if I do not want to reveal information that would make me vulnerable?

The information gathered from the census is confidential. According to the Census Act 1960, data relating to individual households or persons will be kept in strict confidence and not be released to any unauthorised parties, including government departments and agencies. Only aggregate data, which does not reveal details of individuals, can be released.

## What's different this year?

### ► Who counts?

The 2010 Census adopts the de-jure approach, whereby the census will only consider people staying in living quarters six months before or after the reference date of July 6.

This means that the data collected will also cover foreigners or visitors living here six months before or after July 6; family members who are living abroad but will return within six months; babies born before or after that period; students staying at boarding schools; outpatients living away from the household for no longer



**ONLINE** ►  
FOR MORE INFO go to:  
[www.statistics.gov.my](http://www.statistics.gov.my)

than six months; and individuals who died on or after July 6

► DOPU paper  
Another

difference this year is the mixture of interviews and the Drop Off Pick Up (DOPU) procedure. While the interview-method will be retained in rural areas where it is generally favoured, the DOPU will be used in urban areas to better deal with people working during the day.

Householders can fill in the questionnaire themselves this year. It will be delivered in a DOPU package with a manual and black ballpoint pen by enumerators to each living quarters.

After completing the questionnaire, householders can call up the enumerator for "pick up".



KAMARUDUAN  
THESUI

Wan Ramlah ... Supervisors wear blue tags while enumerators wear orange tags.

### ► Online option

As of this year the questionnaire may be filled out online using an ID code provided in the DOPU package which will also include the web address for you to submit the data online.

### ► New Questions

The new census has also been updated to include questions relevant today including those related to modes of transport, population mobility, computer literacy.

### Is there a time limit to completing the questionnaire?

The questionnaire must be completed within three days after the first visit of the enumerator, otherwise an enumerator will be sent around to follow up.

### What happens when I have completed it?

A listing card will be displayed outside the house for at least one year to indicate that the living quarters has been enumerated.

### What if I choose not to cooperate?

There are provisions within the law that state everyone must comply with the census. This includes a requirement for the public to provide true information, permit access for enumerators to meet them, and display the listing card afterwards.

Clause 17 of the Census Act 1960 indicates that a failure to do so may result in a RM100 fine, imprisonment not exceeding six months, or both, however prosecutions are rare as the census is generally seen as something that is meant to be beneficial to society.

### What kind of questions will be asked?

Questions will range from details about the build, infrastructure and ownership of the living quarters; household particulars such as transport used, rental and income and gross monthly income; occupant details such as birth place, level of education, marital status, gender and ethnicity

How can I be sure my personal information is being taken by a genuine enumerator, and how can I be sure that the enumerator will not misuse my information?

**The information gathered from the census is confidential. According to the Census Act 1960 data relating to individual households or persons will be kept in strict confidence and not be released to any unauthorised parties, including government departments and agencies. Only aggregate data, which does not reveal details of individuals, can be released.**

All enumerators and their supervisors will be wearing official ID tags with orange lanyards bearing the official census logo. Supervisors wear blue tags while enumerators wear orange tags.

All census officers are bound by provision in Section 16 (2) of the Census Act 1960 for which misconduct may be penalised with a fine not exceeding RM2,000, imprisonment not exceeding one year or both.

### Why is the census important?

The information gathered will be collated by the Statistics Department to supply useful pieces of aggregated data to any agency which might need it.

These agencies can include anyone from government who may use it in the creation of policies or to guide administration, researchers looking at socio-economic trends and migration patterns, as well as private companies which want to study the market.

Many interesting things can be extrapolated from the data, for example trend that show how Malaysia has developed and evolved in a socio-economic context over time.