

Census will provide key economic data for NEM

PUTRAJAYA: The government wants an economic climate that provides opportunities under the New Economic Model to help those who want to better their economic standing, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop.

Opportunities must be given to all Malaysians, mainly those at the bottom 40% of the socio-economic scale, to improve themselves, he said, adding that it was also necessary to achieve developed nation status by 2020.

Nor Mohamed said to ensure the government was on the right track, the earlier planned census programme is crucial as the data would be used to formulate plans that suit the country and the people's needs.

The Statistics Department will conduct a census between July 6 and Aug 22.

"This census is also crucial because it will be the last one in which Malaysia is still in the middle income bracket. The next census, 10 years from now, is expected to have different results because by that time we

will have a high income economy.

"It will also help us determine the people's needs and steer the economy towards achieving Vision 2020," he told reporters at the launch of the 2010 census programme.

This will be the fifth census held since 1963.

The model unveiled by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak on March 30, among others, is aimed at narrowing the gap between those in the bottom 40% of the socio-economic scale and others within a reasonable time frame and to

strengthen the capability of the 40% households in rural and urban areas that earn less than RM1,500 a month.

Nor Yakcop said that although the category would continue to exist even after Malaysia reached developed status, he expected this group to be "less vulnerable" with additional opportunities provided.

Census Commissioner Datuk Wan Ramlah Wan Abd Raof said the census would involve about 29 million people, of which 7% are expected to be foreigners.