

13th Biennial ISOSS Conference held in Bogor, Indonesia

The biennial 13th Islamic Countries Conference on Statistical Sciences (ICCS-13) was held at the IPB International Convention Centre in Bogor, Indonesia during 18-21 December 2014. The conference was jointly organised by Bogor Agricultural University (BAU) and Islamic Countries Society of Statistical Sciences (ISOSS). The theme of the conference was 'Statistics for Better Life'.

In the opening session of the conference, the Chair of the National Organising Committee, Prof Asep Saefuddin, Vice Chancellor of Trilogi University welcomed all the participants and thanked ISOSS and BAU for their support for holding ICCS-13. Dr Savas Alpay, the Director General of the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), the statistics organ of the OIC, emphasised on the importance of statistical capacity building and cooperation between the national statistics offices and professional organisations such as ISOSS. Acting President of ISOSS, Prof Shahjahan Khan explained the role of ISOSS in bringing together practicing statisticians and researchers of diverse background on the same platform to improve the quality and development of statistics to serve the humanity. Founding President of ISOSS Prof Munir Ahmad gave a brief history of ISOSS and noted its significant impact on the international statistical community over the years.

Prof Illah Sailah, Director, Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education of Indonesia emphasised the need of timely good quality statistics for the formulation of government policies. Dr Sailah announced that Indonesia has created a separate Statistics subject cluster under the new Research Quality Framework. The Deputy Chief Statistician for Production of Statistics in Indonesia, Dr Adi Lumaksono discussed the activities of the National Statistics Office and how they are engaging with the government departments. The Vice Rector of BAU, Prof Hermanto Siregar focussed the significant scientific contribution of the University during last 50 years.

Prof Haryono Suyono, a former Minister of Population of Indonesia presented the first keynote address focussing on the history of developing appropriate index to measure the fertility of Indonesia and how the program was successful in managing the population growth in the country. Prof M Ashraf Memon, University of Queensland, Australia presented a panel session on medical meta-analysis covering different issues related to the current meta-analytic methods in the context of three different meta-analyses on surgical data.

There were two workshops in the conference, the first on "Big Data Analysis" by Prof S Ejaz Ahmed, Canada and the second on "Essentials of 21st Century Undergraduate Statistics Curriculum" by Prof Shahjahan Khan, Australia. The focus on the second workshop was to use educational technologies and adopt appropriate changes in teaching statistics through data analysis and ensure graduates to know statistical computing including database management, multivariable calculus and statistical methods with the ability to communicate technical knowledge in the global context.

The conference dinner was hosted by the Mayor of Bogor, Dr Bima Arya Sugiarto, a political scientist and an alumnus of Australian National University. He welcomed the participants in the cultural evening and noted how important statistics is in planning and evaluation confessing that he was not a very good student of statistics.

The conference tour to Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (Beautiful Indonesia Miniature Park), a miniature park containing history, culture and geographical aspects of all 34 states of Indonesia, was highly enjoyed by the participants. The huge park contains a mini map of Indonesia and many museums representing different aspects of Indonesian nation, nature and culture. It is situated on about 250 acres and was opened in 1975.

In the business session of the conference, Prof Abdul Ghapor Hussin of the National Defence University of Malaysia was elected as the 4th President of ISOSS for the next two years. The meeting announced the next Islamic Countries Conference on Statistical Sciences (ICCS-14) to be held at the Sultan Qaboos University, Oman during 17-20 December 2016.

The proposal of Prof Shahjahan Khan to establish a Statistics Centre of Excellence in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia was unanimously adopted by the delegates. They agreed to work together with other international statistical organisations for joint activities and cooperation. Prof Munir Ahmad's motion on launching of a new Journal of ISOSS was also approved.

The ISOSS Gold Medal was awarded to Prof Asep Saefuddin for his outstanding contribution in the development and promotion of statistics in Indonesia and beyond, and to Prof M Hanif Mian for his contribution to the promotion of ISOSS and development of numerous sample survey techniques.

Reported by Prof Shahjahan Khan, University of Southern Queensland, Australia and Chair, International Organising Committee, ICCS-13