1st ISI Regional Statistics Conference

16–19 November 2014

We are pleased to share with you the success of the inaugural ISI Regional Statistics Conference (ISI RSC 2014) that was held during 16–19 November in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The ISI RSC2014 was organized by the ISI South East Asia Regional Network, in collaboration with Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM), Department of Statistics, Malaysia (DOSM; the National Statistics Office) and Malaysia Institute of Statistics (ISM; the National Statistics Society).

The ISI Council launched the South East Asia Outreach Committee in 2013. By late 2013, there was enough interest in organizing an international conference for end 2014 as an effective way to meet its objectives. Members of the Outreach Committee began discussions with the ISI about organizing a Regional Statistics Conference. We were fortunate to find enthusiastic hosts in Malaysia. However, it seemed like an impossible task and we had many concerns. Was it possible to organize an international conference on a big scale in a short time? A large international statistics conference had never been held in the region before. Would we be able to attract submissions or attract participants?

We need not have worried. Due to the tremendous effort of the members of the committees of the conference, the conference turned out to be a great success. We had the support of the ISI, especially in the development of the scientific programme, and support from BNM, DOSM, ISM and local academics from various universities. The three major corporate sponsors and thirteen exhibitors had a prominent presence. The organization surpassed our expectations. The conference was preceded by a one-day seminar organized by the Irving Fisher Committee (IFC) on Central Banks Statistics. Many members of the ISI Executive Committee, the IFC and the Office of the ISI were present at the conference. In addition, World Bank funds made possible the participation of more than thirty junior faculty and students from developing regions. There were well attended pre- and post conference courses.

We had submissions from about 250 paper writers and presenters and around 500 participants from 40 countries, including the South East Asia region. The keynote address by the Zeti Akhtar Aziz, Governor of Bank Negara Malaysia on the role of statistics in producing valuable information for planning and policy was extremely stimulating. The three plenary speakers, Andrew Sheng, Agus Sudjianto and Pedro Luis do Nascimento Silva addressed the importance of good quality financial statistics, modeling and surveys. Invited and contributed paper sessions covered fields from machine learning, reliability and non-parametric statistics to applications in health, finance, economics, environment and social sciences. The scientific sessions were so diverse and interesting that there was substantial participation even on the last day. The ISI RSC Young Statistician’s Awards were awarded to Syed Shahnewaaz Ali of University of Dhaka (First), Klairung Samart of Prince of Songkla University (Second) and Shu-Yik Low of Stratos Consulting Group (Third). The ISI RSC 2014 Most Promising Paper
by a Student was awarded to Ewilly J.Y. Liew, Monash University Malaysia.

Everyone had a wonderful time enjoying world-renowned Malaysian hospitality. There were numerous occasions to mingle socially and network with other participants. The social program included receptions on the first day and after the closing ceremony as well as a gala dinner on the second day hosted by the Governor of Bank Negara Malaysia. The dinner was accompanied by wonderful local music and cultural dances.

We wish to thank members of the Scientific Programme Committee, the Local Organizing Committee and the institutions involved that supported us. We also want to express our appreciation to the ISI Executive Committee for its enthusiastic support of the conference. Most importantly, we wish to thank all participants for making ISI RSC2014 a reality.

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Vice-Chair, Organizing Committee, ISI RSC 2014