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Malaysians earning more now, says dept

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KUALA LUMPUR: The average household income of Malaysians increased from RM3,249 per month in 2004 to RM3,686 per month last year, registering an average annual growth of 4.3 per cent.

The Department of Statistics attributed the increase to positive economic growth, which generated ample employment and income earning opportunities for all Malaysians.

The statistics were collated through the Household Income Survey (HIS) 2007, which was conducted in July, September and November last year. A total of 38,083 households were interviewed.

Datuk Seri Sulaiman Mahbob, the director-general of the economic planning unit in the Prime Minister's Department, said the urban household income increased by 3.3 per cent per annum from RM3,959 in 2004 to RM4,356 last year, while the rural

household income increased by 6.8 per cent, from RM1,875 to RM2,283.

He said the higher growth rate for rural households was mainly due to better commodity prices, particularly rubber and palm oil.

"In terms of ethnicity, all groups recorded an increase in household income during the 2004-2007 period.

Last year, the Bumiputera household income increased by 5.2 per cent per annum to RM3,156 per month.

"Meanwhile, there was an increase in Chinese and Indian household income to RM4,853 and RM3,799 respectively, with a corresponding growth rate from three per cent to 3.2 per cent."

He said the overall poverty situation also showed an improvement during the 2004-2007 period.

"The incidence of poverty among Malaysians declined

from 5.7 per cent in 2004 to 3.6 per cent last year. In other words, the number of poor households fell by 33 per cent — from 311,300 to 209,000 during the same period."

He said the decline in the number of poor households was due to positive economic growth and government intervention, through the implementation of various poverty eradication programmes and projects.

This could be seen in urban areas, where there was a decrease in the number of poor households, from 2.5 per cent in 2004 to two per cent last year. In rural areas, it declined from 11.9 per cent to 7.1 per cent.

Sulaiman said the survey found that the Ninth Malaysia Plan's objective of eradicating hardcore poverty was on track. The poverty level in the country had decreased from 1.2 per cent in 2004 to 0.7 per cent last year.



Datuk Seri Sulaiman Mahbob says there are now fewer poor households across all groups