

United Nations Workshop on Census Data Evaluation for English Speaking African Countries
12 – 16 November 2012, Kampala, Uganda
Recommendations

1. The participants of the workshop expressed their appreciation to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics for hosting the workshop, to the United Nations Statistics Division for organizing and conducting the workshop and to the United Nations Population Division for providing substantive support and expertise.
2. The workshop concluded that the process of evaluating the quality of census data is of critical importance for both the producers and users of statistics; for producers, it offers an insight in terms of plausibility and reliability of data and users are provided with a more comprehensive understanding of issues that need to be focused upon in the phase of data exploitation and analysis.
3. Population and housing census is an enormous exercise and its numerous components provide ample opportunities for introducing errors in the count of population, households, housing units and their characteristics. While these errors in coverage and content of the census are to be expected and various techniques are, as a rule, introduced in each of the phases of the census to eliminate or minimize them, it is still necessary to conduct additional and thorough assessment of resulting statistics within the national statistical office, in addition to the analysis conducted by specialized users and institutions.
4. In that context, it is essential to start planning for the census quality control and census data evaluation simultaneously with the process of planning for the census itself. Setting the quality control and census evaluation team early is necessary as it would allow for continuous monitoring and input since quality control has to be maintained throughout the entire process of planning and executing the census.
5. It was emphasized that the Post Enumeration Survey represents a vital indicator of the quality of the census, both in terms of coverage and content. In that context, the workshop recommended that all the population and housing censuses should plan for and execute the Post Enumeration Survey, while at the same time recognizing the additional complexity and costs that such survey involves.
6. National statistical offices need to build their capacity, supported by the United Nations, to apply and interpret advanced tools for census data evaluation, primarily from the demographic toolbox. As demonstrated at the workshop, demographic methods for evaluating the completeness and plausibility of census statistics provide a powerful instrument and should be incorporated as routine operations within national statistical systems.
7. The workshop further recommended that census data evaluation by way of demographic methods is best and most effective if conducted before disseminating census data; this will ensure that users of the census data are fully informed in respect of the quality, reliability and accuracy of census statistics.

8. The participants recognized the usefulness of various methodological tools that were presented at the workshop including MortPak and the IUSSP spreadsheets; and expressed the opinion that there was a need for continuous commitment in updating these two methods, especially from the point of view on the impact of HIV/AIDS, in a coordinated manner. In that respect, the workshop requested both United Nations Statistics Division and United Nations Population Division to play an active role in this process.
9. The workshop noted that the United Nations population estimates often differ from national census results and that these discrepancies place national statistical authorities in a need to provide additional explanations regarding the reliability of census statistics to skeptical users. In that context, the workshop recommends that the United Nations Statistics Division, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Division – which produces United Nations population estimates – explore the possibility of organizing regional/sub-regional seminars that would provide an opportunity to present and discuss the process of producing United Nations population estimates and projections, as these carry a specific weight in African countries.
10. The workshop recommended exploring the possibility of establishing more effective communication and exchange with the producers of the United Nations population estimates in order to ensure a more harmonized presentation of population figures.
11. The workshop requested United Nations Statistics Division to initiate discussion regarding the guidance on the level of under/over-enumeration in population and housing censuses that would automatically trigger the need for adjustment in the preparation for the 2020 round of population and housing censuses.
12. The participants also recommended developing a workshop curriculum focusing on measuring city daytime population in population and housing censuses and called on United Nations Statistics Division in that respect.