

**UNITED NATIONS WORKSHOP ON THE 2010 WORLD PROGRAMME ON  
POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUSES**

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**PRE – WORKSHOP ASSIGNMENT**

Country: Nigeria

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**INTRODUCTION:** This consolidated country statement is presented against the backdrop of the fact that the field work of the 2006 National Population and Housing Census in Nigeria was rounded off only in July 2006. This presentation therefore attempts to relive the experience in the conduct of the last census as the information obtained is still being processed.

**B. CENSUS METHODOLOGIST’S REPORT**

**PRACTICABILITY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES**

1. **Recommended core topics:** We wish to note that many of the recommended core topics were embedded into the various questionnaires (referred to as NPC 0s) used for the 2006 Nigerian Census. We however note that the intention by the United Nations is not to encourage Nations to include all of these in their Census questionnaires. Perhaps because it was the first time Nigeria was conducting a housing Census, some respondents complained about the length of the main Census questionnaire (NPC 01). During the symbolic enumeration of the Governor of Ogun State, Nigeria, on the first day of Census enumeration, he made the remark that if he was a party to the finalization of the Census questionnaire, he would have suggested a reduction in the number of questions in NPC 01 in particular. This observation of Mr. Governor was tested in the field and found to be common among many Nigerians.

The core topics as contained in the draft principles and recommendations are divided into two broad main categories namely Population Census topics and Housing Census Topics.

a. **Recommended Population Census Core Topics**

As listed on pages 91-92 of the draft Principles and Recommendations there are twenty six (26) population core topics directly collected and four (4) core derived topics.

In eliciting responses, enumerators faced little or no difficulty with respondents on questions on Geographical and internal migration characteristics. This same assertion

applies to the question on International migration characteristics. The questions are indeed relevant as background information on the population. With reference to the questions on Household and family characteristics, the term Head of household is used to conceptualize the household reference person in the 2006 Nigerian Census. The definitions of terms are elucidated in the various manuals of instructions (enumerator's, supervisor's, coordinators etc).

The Core questions in the demographic and social characteristics were administered with little problems particularly with the item of 'age'. The illiterate respondents were assisted with the list of historical events (which were given to all the enumerators) to determine their ages. Quite a number of literate respondents, particularly the females, were not forthcoming with their dates of birth and ages.

The enumerators faced difficulty in the administration of fertility and mortality questions particularly in Southwest Nigeria where culture does not allow the enumeration of children in the family. The cultural belief is that if one merely counted how many children she has, she was bound to lose one or two of them. Moreover, in quite a number of cases, most Nigerians were wary of providing responses to questions on the occurrence of deaths in their households.

The item on the questionnaire on Educational characteristics elicited adequate responses particularly in the application of the concept of literacy. In the Nigerian Census documents, literacy was defined as the ability to read and to write in any language which, going by the content and spirit of the draft recommendation and principles, is acceptable. However, the recommendation to conduct literacy tests during the Census (which the draft already admits is impracticable) may not be practicable as the Nigerian respondents may resist any attempt to doubt the claims on their literacy levels. Besides, more time (which was a contentious issue during the just concluded Census) would be needed to administer the Census questionnaire. During the 2006 Nigerian Census, enumerators were trained to 'probe' further to determine the levels of literacy of respondents, where they were in doubt, without necessarily expressing that doubt.

The instability that characterizes the labour climate may limit the utility of the data collected on the activity status of respondents. This is due to the short reference period of economic activity. The finding during the census was that even when enumerators were still within enumeration areas, activity statuses of many of the respondents had changed. The implication of this is that most of the respondents who would have been recorded as being economically active during the Census are in reality, unemployed. A longer time frame (Nigerian Census adopted 12 months) may be considered for determining the current activity status of respondents. The question item in the 2006 Nigerian Census questionnaire on occupation allowed the enumerator to record the main occupation of the respondents. There was no restriction on what could be recorded such that a petty trader selling cooked rice had 'cooked rice selling' recorded as the occupation since that was the main task and duty at the time of Census. In determining the status in employment, the census questionnaire has an item on class of worker. This is to determine whether the respondent was a salary/wage worker, casual wage worker, owned work with paid employee, owned work without paid employee or assisted in family work without pay.

In administering the question item on disability status during the Census, enumerators were trained to be careful if they were to successfully elicit responses. They were not to hold any assumptions on the status of the respondents. The difficulty with this is that most disabled respondents did not offer correct information on their status for obvious reasons. Most accurate responses in this regard were offered by disabled respondents who believed that the availability of the information on disability prevalence to Government would result in intervention strategies. The domains in the question item for the 2006 Nigerian Census included the status of upper body functioning.

Respondents were able to provide adequate information on some of the housing census topics investigated during the 2006 Nigeria Census. However, some were not willing to provide these information. It is against this background that each of these topics are examined in this section of the country statement.

We wish to note that the housing census questionnaire was administered only on the regular households. This clarification becomes necessary because the classification of living quarters outlined in the draft document recommended the housing census of hotels, institutions, camps and workers' quarters. Besides, the 2006 Nigerian Census did not elicit information on the location of living quarters. A global application of the concepts of "locality", "urban" and "rural" was made irrespective of the classification of living quarters during enumeration area demarcation.

All the recommended housing questions in the draft document were included in the main 2006 Nigerian Census questionnaire. In fact there was a question item on household facility which elicited response on how many of the listed (and functional) facilities are owned by the respondents. There were in addition to the recommended item on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) devices recommended by the draft document. It covered quite a number of household facilities to suit local conditions.

As state earlier, enumerators faced some difficulties in administering the housing census questionnaire. It was the first time Nigeria conducted a housing census. Most respondents, particularly the illiterate ones, felt embarrassed by some of the questions, some of them went to the extent of asking what the business of government was with what they called their 'private life'. Some others asked if government was going to provide them with these facilities if they didn't have them. The Nigerian elites were also reluctant in their responses such that some of the information obtained on the topics in the housing census questionnaire were by direct observation by the enumerators.

## 2. Recommended Tabulations:

The practice in the antecedents of the conduct of the Nigerian Census is to release a provisional figure. That for the 2006 Census is generally and eagerly being awaited by all Nigerians. This is particularly so because of the earlier intention by the government to apply the census result in the delimitation of the country into electoral constituencies.

The recommended tabulations in the draft document are implementable with the information obtained during the 2006 Census. Some of these tables may however have to be generated to accommodate the specific country concerns in the 2006 Census questionnaire. For instance, with respect to tabulation H19, the Nigerian Census questionnaire elicited information on the general access to Computer and not on access to internet. The tabulations in previous Nigeria Censuses were many and various not necessarily voluminous, but met the needs of various data users.

### 3. Census Management and other Issues:

In planning for the 2006 Nigeria Census, due cognizance was taken of the problems associated with the conduct of past Censuses in Nigeria. There was a stage-by-stage implementation guideline with a set of benchmarks used to guide the achievement of targets. One key element in the conduct of the just concluded census in Nigeria was the interaction between data users and producers at a workshop to evaluate the quality of the proposed Census questionnaire and understand user requirements. The workshop came up with a set of underlining principles to form the basis of what later became the census questionnaire.

The census timetable was established and a chart of operations was generated. The experience however was that some of the targets (in terms of dates for the completion of specific census operation) could not be met as some of them were affected by other national activities and the timeliness of fund releases by government.

In order to foster the involvement of all levels of Nigerian Government in the execution of the 2006 population and housing project, National, State and Local Government Area advisory and publicity committees were formed. These committees mobilized human and material resources at each level to support the census.

A chain of Census Communication activities was also put in place as part of the preparatory activities to engender the wholehearted cooperation and assistance not only of the general public but also of the various organs and levels of government. The National Population Commission depended, to a large extent, on these stakeholders in the conduct of the Census and they contributed a great deal to the human and material resources deployed in the preparation for and the conduct of the Census.

There had been quite a lot of negative mindsets on the conduct of population censuses by Nigerians, consequently, quite a number of transparency-check mechanisms were built into all the stages of the 2006 Census. One of such was the inter-ethnic/inter-regional cross posting of Census Supervisors to alleviate possible misconceptions by making the census process transparent.

In all, the management process considered the need to ensure that the 2006 Census results was reliable enough to pass whatever detailed technical evaluation test it might be subjected to.

## C. CENSUS MANAGER'S REPORT

### (1) Experience with the 2006 national population and housing census:

It is noteworthy that Nigeria adopted the register-based approach in the conduct of the 2006 national population and housing census in March. Quite a number of activities went into this and the strongest of these are described below:

- a. Census Publicity, public enlightenment and advocacy – Most, if not all, ethnic and regional sections of Nigeria see the census as a contest in political supremacy. Besides, there are a lot of misgivings about the process for the conduct of the census and the utility of the census data. Consequently, the National Population Commission against the backdrop of this, arranged an elaborate census publicity, public enlightenment and advocacy programme aimed at enlisting the interest of the general public and its cooperation. Specific handbills on question items in the questionnaire and on the uses of Census data were produced widely and distributed. Floats were organized in all the nooks and crannies of the country particularly in the rural areas and for hard-to-enumerate groups. The publicity programme of the Census was coordinated by the National, State and Local Government Area Census publicity and public enlightenment Committees which were inaugurated early enough to provide ample time to sensitize the general public. Publicity for the census was conducted to support the various stages of the census. For instance, enumeration area demarcation did not start in any Local Government Area or locality until a sensitization programme of some sort had been carried out. Besides, the National Population Commission employed the services of local town criers particularly in localities where the radio signals (which has the widest media coverage) was not well received.

The main themes in the Census publicity campaign were the relevance of the Census, coverage, accuracy, comparability, coherence, and the usefulness of census data.

- a. Mapping: In the conduct of Census 2006, Nigeria adopted the decision to improve upon the enumeration area demarcation frame used during the 1991 national population census. Line maps were used in 1991 and it was decided that geo-referenced maps be used to enhance the quality and reliability of census data. The geo-referenced map used during the census facilitated full and unduplicated coverage of the country to a very large extent. The enumeration area maps were drawn to scale and a combination of these were generated to form the topographic maps. There were also locality maps and the local government area administrative maps. All of these were produced several months ahead of the census as they were fairdrawn and stored in the computer for retrieval. The decision to make use of maps drawn to scale required that the National Population Commission trained the personnel (particularly the enumeration area demarcators) most of who were not technical professionals in town planning and survey. Satellite imageries were also produced to cover a great percentage of the land area of the country. In the course of the mapping all the

building within the localities in each enumeration area and their owners were listed. This is to allow for a comparability listing of areas from this census to the next. It also allows for an accuracy-check to ensure that no locality or land area is left out during census enumeration.

Staff Recruitment and Training: A large number of enumerators were required to conduct the census. The practice before the 2006 Census was to have a team of two enumerators (one male and one female) to cover an enumeration area (EA) during the Census. Quality check of the demarcated EAs showed that some of the EAs were not large enough to have a two-man team cover them during the census. Consequently; a grouping of EAs had to be done and a team of two enumerators in some cases covered more than one EA. In spite of this however, the size of the workforce (enumerators) was still large.

In order to ensure transparency in the recruitment procedure, the National Population Commission placed advertisement in the newspapers to call for applications and the adhoc staff (enumerators, supervisors and coordinators) were selected on the basis of competence. During demarcation of enumeration areas, the personnel was drawn largely from among the regular staff of the Commission while the required balance were recruited from among the non-staff professionals who were screened for competence before they were engaged.

The Census training programme was phased to cover each aspect of the work. The first major training started with the demarcators which was done at national and state levels. The other phases were the pre-tests of census instruments and logistics which also involved the deployment of adhoc staff to selected EAs. Training was also required for those engaged to do the trial census. All these phases of training were organized and conducted against the background consideration of the need to recruit, and effectively train, staff on the methodology for census taking which is the bedrock of a reliable census result.

The various levels of training for census enumeration are the: Master Training, Training of Trainers, Facilitators' Training, Coordinators', Supervisors' and Enumerators' training. For each of these levels of training in all the training centres nationwide, there was a manual of instruction which served as guidebooks to census functionaries not only while on the training but as reference materials during the fieldwork.

The duration of training was determined based on the level of training but more time was allotted to the training of enumerators, supervisors and fieldwork coordinators who were the primary functionaries in the census taking process. Besides, more time was needed to groom them in the new methodology of the conduct of the national population and housing census.

Fieldwork: The activities under fieldwork operations included, but not limited to, enumeration area demarcation (EAD), Map production, Census enumeration and post enumeration survey. In each of all these however, it is important to note that the quality of work depends on the preparatory work. For instance, effective quality check on the maps produced depends largely on the supervisory activities of appropriate competent field staff. Besides, no matter how thorough the fieldwork was, negative reportage of the process could

mar the success of the census at any stage. Consequently, elements which could cause failure for the fieldwork include inappropriate training and lack of cooperation by the field staff and lack of commitment to follow due process among others.

In the just concluded census in Nigeria, there were in-built mechanisms to tackle the problems associated with the fieldwork. For instance there was quality monitoring by various national and state level teams of National Population Commission officials while problem field staff were identified and sanctioned. More importantly, and with respect to the quality check of the census enumeration fieldwork, a post enumeration survey (PES) was conducted some weeks after the Census. The matching of the results of the (PES) with the main census is currently on-going to determine the level of under-enumeration of people and dwellings. Furthermore, feedback was encouraged from the field staff to facilitate the adjustment of procedures for the conduct of a census.

The Use of ICT: – The National Population Commission is aware of the conclusion of international comparability for the data generated from census result. It is thus to applying this to maintain standard classifications in the processing of the census result. This is more so because a reliable data dissemination is dependent on collection of reliable census information. It is an established fact data processing cannot improve the accuracy of census data but the usefulness, quality and timeliness of the release of census tabulations can be guaranteed by proper processing of the Census field returns. Consequently, the field returns from the 2006 Census (particularly, the questionnaires) were scanned to ensure accuracy of recording and their validity using high scale IT hardware solutions. The computer environment is networked and the basic program files are being stored at the national headquarters of the National Population Commission. It is important to note however, that the first stage processing of field data is done at the seven data processing centres in the country from where they are transmitted to the national office. All the staff handling the ICT devices also underwent training and those who had been trained were retrained.

ICT is currently being used in the scanning and the coding of field returns with the use of a coding processes recognized by the computer. This is being careful done to forestall the incidence of, for instance two EAs carrying the same identification codes.

Data Dissemination: The field returns of the 2006 Nigeria population and housing census is still being processed. Consequently, not much could be said of the dissemination of the data from the census result. However, the plan is to present the published tables and reports for wide distribution to the entire world. It should be noted that there are constitutional steps in the release of the census result in Nigeria. The census result is not deemed to be valid unless the national assembly (the national legislative arm of government of Nigeria) accepts it.

Whenever it is accepted, data from the 2006 national population and housing census would be disseminated in hardcopy and electronic form to all the end-users.

## 2. Plans for the next census:

The Post Enumeration Survey (PES) for the 2006 national population and housing census in Nigeria was concluded in July 2006 (barely three months ago). The implication of this is that

planning for the next census may only commence when the 2006 census data has been finalized.

However, the lessons from the 'on-going' census are being compiled and would be finalized with the acceptance of its result by Nigerians.