



## United Nations Expert Group Meeting to Review Critical Issues Relevant to the Planning of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses

15-17 September 2004, New York

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
Statistics Division - Demographic and Social Statistics Branch

### Purpose

At its 35<sup>th</sup> session, the Statistical Commission recommended that an international expert group be formed to focus on critical issues related to planning the next round of population and housing censuses. Recognizing that the United Nations Statistics Division decennial census programme cannot cover all emerging topics, the Commission has asked the expert group to set priorities at its first meeting<sup>1</sup>.

The purpose of the expert group meeting, therefore, is to set priorities and propose concrete outputs for the development of the 2010 World Population and Housing census Programme. Specifically the meeting will have before it relevant sections of the report of the 35th session of the Statistical Commission (see E/2004/24, chap. II. B, para. 2) as well as the draft resolution on the 2010 census round that will be submitted by the Census Symposium to the Statistical Commission at its 36th session. As the first in a series of meetings, the expert group will also establish terms of reference outlining its mandate in relation to the above mentioned Programme.

### Sessions

1. Emerging issues and core topics: In recent years countries have called for improved statistics on a variety of issues, including, fertility, mortality, international migration, education, labour, health, characteristics of families, households and living arrangements, persons according to their usual residence, the foreign-born and disability (E/2004/24, chap. II. B, para. 2 (b), i). How will the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*<sup>2</sup> be modified to address these emerging issues? What are the core topics which may be included in censuses?
2. Alternative approaches to traditional census taking: Conventionally censuses have been characterized by individual enumeration, universality within a defined territory, simultaneity and defined periodicity (see *Principles and Recommendations*, paras. 1.1-1.10). To what extent should the *Principles and Recommendations* be updated to take into account alternative approaches? What are the key features of various approaches to census taking, which should be included in a census metadata system (E/2004/24, chap. II. B, para. 2 (b), vii)?
3. Strengthening the promotion and dissemination of census results: What are some of the strategies that could be developed to assist countries in meeting their own local,

<sup>1</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 4 (E/2004/24), chap. II. B, para. 2 (a).

<sup>2</sup> *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*, Rev. 1 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.XVII.8 and corrigendum).

regional and national planning needs while also addressing the need for comparative data across countries and regions of the world (E/2004/24, chap. II. B, para. 2 (b), ii)? What new pressures are being imposed on national statistical/census offices by governments interested in using census data for non-statistical purposes such as planning elections and other nation-building activities, addressing demands for individual-level data for the purpose of preparing population registers or voter registers (E/2004/24, chap. II. B, para. 2 (b), vi)? How best can national statistical/census offices respond to such demands? To what extent can census data provide the required information for large intergovernmental initiatives such as the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, or the United Nations Literacy Decade (E/2004/24, chap. II. B, para. 2 (b), vi)? Given the high costs of census operations, what strategies can countries adopt to maximize the dissemination and use of census results to justify such high investments (E/2004/24, chap. II. B, para. 2 (b), viii)? How can the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* system better contribute to ensuring the international exchange of census data (E/2004/24, chap. II. B, para. 2 (b), ix)?

4. Reviewing national experience and lessons learned in the use of information technology (IT): While it is widely acknowledged that IT can expedite census activities, minimize error, and improve the quality and dissemination of census results, if not properly used, IT can also derail certain census operations. What are the lessons learned from countries that have used IT in the past census round? How should countries successfully incorporate IT into various census activities?

### **Format of the Expert Group Meeting**

The *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Rev.1* will serve as a reference for the expert group meeting. The meeting will subsequently submit its recommendations and terms of reference to the 36<sup>th</sup> session of the Statistical Commission for consideration.



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