

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT
Statistics Division

ESA/STAT/AC.91/10
24 October 2003

English only

**Expert Group Meeting to
Review the United Nations Demographic Yearbook System
10-14 November 2003
New York**

**Factors affecting countries ability to respond to *Demographic
Yearbook* data requests**

By

Simeon Agbo Adeyemi
Federal Office of Statistics
Abuja, Nigeria

A. Introduction

1. Data collection procedures in the area of demographic indicators are mainly through:
 - i. Population census - this is usually carried out once every 10 years but circumstances have made it difficult to keep to this time schedule. The last census in Nigeria was conducted in 1991, and the next census is yet to be conducted. Hence gaps exist and only population estimates are used to change the data series. The National Population Commission (NPopC) is responsible for population censuses.
 - ii. Household based survey - there are two source of demographic data - via sample surveys conducted annually (quarterly) by the Federal Office of Statistics, and the National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) currently conducted by the National Population Commission. The NDHS is an occasional survey carried out to ascertain variations from census estimates.
 - iii. Administrative records - quite a lot demographic data are generated via administrative records of hospitals across the country by the Federal and State Governments Ministries of Health. Also records of Local Government related to marriages, deaths, births, immunization, etc are collated. Other administrative records are those of migration statistics, which the Immigration Department compiles at various ports of entry into the country. This information is published annually by the Social Statistics section of the Federal Office of Statistics in Nigeria.
 - iv. In recent times, the Nigerian Statistical Yearbook, which obtains its data from the three sources above, and other sources, has become a veritable source of information for the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook*. However, the Nigerian Statistical Yearbook suffers from numerous problems.
2. It is therefore necessary for one to engage all agencies involved, in one way or the other, in demographic data collection to meet the requirements of completing the United Nations demographic data requests. Alternatively, extensive estimation or projection exercise will be required.

B. Availability and accessibility of data requested

3. Gaps are noticed in various demographic data sets due to delays in conducting surveys and censuses. Where data exist they are not current enough to meet the needs of the *Demographic Yearbook* data requests. Some surveys results are not released in the form one can disaggregate to meet the needs of the *Yearbook* requests. For example, age classifications related to data on major town indicators and marital status are not readily

available, while efforts to get down to the lower units of survey coverage are usually not possible.

C. Capacity of countries to provide the data

4. In Nigeria, institutional arrangements to provide the data are on ground and the manpower required for the exercise is available. However, the funds to conduct most surveys and population censuses, and for the compilation of administrative records of agencies, are lacking. Hence, various types of data gaps have built up overtime.

D. National priorities

5. Demographic data are a high priority but lack of funds hamper conducting of surveys and censuses. Population problems are identified as key causes of poverty problems in Nigeria and profiling them is a high priority.

E. Views about data requirement

6. Data requirement for the *Demographic Yearbook* are viewed as comprehensive and detailed. Why current data sets are difficult to provide is due to the nature of survey results, which are mostly released in percentages (ratios). Hence to apply survey data to population estimates requires acceptable and uniform methods from the United Nations Statistics Division. There is therefore a need for the Federal Office of Statistics and the National Population Commission to collaborate in completing the *Yearbook* questionnaire on population estimates.

7. With regard to the vital statistics questionnaire, the requests are so detailed that most survey and census reports cannot provide all the information being requested. Presently, the problem is in how to marry reports from surveys and administrative records in order to come up with the complete set of information that is being requested.

8. The information being requested by the *Demographic Yearbook* questionnaire on international migration and travel statistics is very elaborate and seems to cover many aspects. Current statistics on migration in Nigeria is of very poor status due to non-processing of available records from the Nigeria immigration services. Also, the terms "long-terms immigrants/emigrants" seem difficult to ascertain, as those arriving in or departing the country will in most cases, not disclose if they will be observing long-term status as immigrants or emigrants.

F. Questionnaire completion and impinging factors

9. Completion of the questionnaires requires devotion, time, human resources, and funds to facilitate travel and contacts. The most critical problems include lack of adequate up to date information and the ability to keep proper migration records, as well as delays in processing what is collected from administrative records of the Immigration Services. Funds should be made available for uninterrupted household survey reports while

hospital records must be collected regularly and analysed by the Health Ministry for general use by the central statistics office.

G. Motivation to provide the data

10. The United Nations Statistics Division should conduct a workshop on the data requirements for the *Demographic Yearbook*. The workshop should address issues related to terms, concepts and methodology for estimation and procedures for using survey data in projections and updating of census data. The United Nations Statistics Division should provide a country nominated professional some funds to cover transportation and other logistics that would enable such officer to complete the questionnaires reasonably within a specified time frame. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) uses this method to get data for the ECOWAS Socio-Economic Data Questionnaire instead on depending on national statistics offices or the officer responsible for completing the questionnaire to use his personal funds to do the work.