



**2006 AFRICA SYMPOSIUM ON STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT**

**“THE 2010 ROUND OF POPULATION AND HOUSING  
CENSUSES”**

**CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Proposed Amendments to the *UN Principles  
& Recommendations for Population &  
Housing Censuses (Revision 1):***

**An African Position**

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**February 2006**

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## PREFACE

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During the 22-26 August meeting in New York, the Expert Group Meeting on the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses was concerned by the lack of progress and preparation at the African region level and resolved that a meeting for census experts be organized in time for preparing an African submission to the revision of the Principles & Recommendations on Population and Housing Censuses (*P&R*) in time for submission to the UN Statistics Commission in March 2006.

In this regard, African countries mandated South Africa in November 2005 in Yaounde, Cameroon to coordinate African countries to assemble in order to collectively discuss the 2010 censuses and to come up with recommendations with respect to the *P&R* -- an African position -- as its contribution to the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses. At the advent of the Millennium Development Goals, Africa's recommendation will be crucial in terms of its contribution to global dialogue on revisions and recommendations made to the 2010 round of population and housing censuses and the role that population and housing censuses play as the source of necessary underlying data.

In close consultation with the UNECA and the UNSD, a meeting was held in Cape Town, South Africa titled the **2006 Africa Symposium on Statistical Development: The 2010 Round of Population & Housing Censuses.** The Symposium brought together experts from forty-three (43) African countries, regional bodies and international organizations.

The Symposium would among other things, respond to the international debate on the Principles and Recommendations on Population and Housing Censuses to reflect an African dimension to assist African countries in planning and carrying out improved and cost-effective censuses in the 2010 round of population and housing censuses.

Acknowledgement needs to be made of the fact that while the scope of the international recommendations usually provide broad guidelines on the main characteristics of population and housing censuses, variations occur over regions and time. This not only applies to considerations for census operations and methods, but also to the content of censuses and recommended tabulations.

By taking this into account, in preparing for the 2010 round of population and housing censuses in Africa, four overarching themes guided African discussions in the revision of the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses:

1. Developing sustainable statistical systems in Africa and addressing the challenges of statistical development and capacity building in Africa so that the 2010 round of population and housing censuses becomes a core foundation to develop sound information and knowledge management system for national development planning.
2. An appreciation of the extent to which changing socio-economic conditions in Africa determine the priority given to particular census topics in an effort to make the 2010 round of population and housing census more responsive to evidence-based decision making in Africa;
3. An increasing emphasis on census operations in view of changing technologies and the challenges of funding and resource mobilization for census-taking; and,
4. An increased emphasis on the responsiveness of censuses to user needs for demographic and social data.

Out of this Symposium came a number of key recommendations and resolutions that represent a holistically African position on census taking in Africa in the 2010 round as well as key issues and challenges that confront the continent on national statistical systems and capacity building.

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## BACKGROUND

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The 2000 round of censuses witnessed limited participation of African countries undertaking a census. In the past 50 years, not all countries in African countries have undertaken a census. Of the 230 countries and areas in the world that report to the United Nations Demographic Yearbook, a total of 194 have conducted a population and housing census since 1995. Eighty nine per cent of the world's population resides in a country that has conducted a census since 1995. In Africa, only 52 per cent of the population resides in a country that has conducted a census, compared with 99 per cent of Europeans, and 95 per cent of Asians. For the remaining 48 per cent of the African population, their characteristics, as well as their needs are not precise. The critical question is - what is Africa basing her development effort on if it is not known how many and who we are addressing? (UNECA, 2005).

The 2000 round of censuses, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, was marked by funding crises. The ever-increasing costs of running a census of accuracy and quality, combined with ever-shrinking public sector budgets forced several countries to delay their censuses. The scourge of conflict and the outbreak of war and political instability have further made the prospect of carrying out regular censuses somewhat oblique.

The history of census taking in Africa has therefore been characterized by irregularity, incompleteness, inaccuracies and subsequently a gross under-utilization of census data. Consequently, census results have not adequately informed policy formulation and programme implementation, and socio-economic development in general, more so because government policy makers and planners were ill-equipped to utilize the results.

Not only have census data been under-utilized, but there has also been very poor archiving of data, resulting in its loss in a number of countries. The few countries that have preserved their data tend to have poor meta-data on census codes and definitions, which has limited the utility of their census data.

The under-utilization or lack thereof of census data has discouraged many governments from funding census projects and international donor agencies from providing technical and financial assistance. This in turn has posed serious challenges for census taking in Africa.

This reality becomes a daunting one in view of the fact that Africa currently stands as one of the least developed continents in the world with over startling statistics that point to growing numbers of the African population living in abject poverty, lowest net enrolment rates, slow progress in child mortality, rising maternal mortality rates, high HIV prevalence rates and environmental degradation (UN, 2005)<sup>1</sup>. Yet the centrality of population and housing censuses in knowledge management in Africa in the pursuit of evidence-based planning and in monitoring progress made towards achieving national development goals cannot be overstated.

It is in this context that a population and housing census becomes one of the most important statistical operations undertaken by African governments, as census information is needed by governments for a broad variety of purposes such as planning and essential development programmes.

Compiling and disseminating statistics has been particularly challenging in Africa, since it requires both skilled personnel and resources, as well as coordination between local, provincial, and national administrations on one hand, and national, sub regional, regional, and international stakeholders, on the other hand. Yet for years, many African countries did not engage in comprehensive statistics compilation because of civil unrest, or poor economic performance.

Initiatives such as the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Poverty Reduction Strategies for example, call for the efficient use of existing resources to propel the continent's development. Yet a common concern for Africa relates to the availability and quality of data with regard to indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The availability and quality of data in this area is not sufficient. Many African countries are still not able to report on the indicators.

Selected African countries with varied histories of census taking and varied levels of expertise in conducting various census activities have been co-operating, albeit sporadically, in the field of

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations (2005) The Millennium Development Goals Report. New York: UN

statistics for the past five years. In preparation for the 2000 round of censuses, in 2001, a meeting was held in South Africa to discuss the preparedness of African countries, mainly in the SADC Region to undertake the 2000 round of censuses<sup>2</sup>. Further meetings occurred in 2003 around Reducing Census Costs<sup>3</sup> and disseminating census data from an African perspective<sup>4</sup>. While the meetings were beneficial in terms of countries sharing experience, there has since been little inter-censal activity in Africa that has involved all African member states.

In Africa, funding for censuses and surveys depends heavily on donors, as they are costly statistical activities. Therefore, they are not implemented regularly. In many cases, surveys in African countries are not coordinated and the data produced show discrepancies because of the use of incompatible concepts, definitions, classifications and methods. The question therefore is: Are national statistical systems in developing countries capable of responding to the data needs to achieve the MDGs? Can the 2010 round of population and housing censuses help meet the challenge?

In many developing countries and especially in Africa, this kind of information systems is still to be built. During the 1980s and 1990s, a decline of statistics has been noted in most African sub-Saharan countries, as a consequence, *inter alia*, of the economic and social crisis faced by these countries. The production and dissemination of a lot of basic statistics were interrupted due to lack of equipment and finance. Many qualified staff left national statistical offices for sectors with better working conditions and salaries. The gap between the production and demand for statistics was widening. Poor production of statistics led to less demand and less support from national authorities and donors, which in turn lead to poorer production, thus creating a vicious circle. Basic statistical activities like demographic censuses were delayed and the use of administrative records for statistical purposes was stopped in many countries (UNECA, 2005).

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<sup>2</sup> Census Managers Meeting, Pretoria, South Africa 2001 (Document ASSD 2006/05 available on the 2006 Africa Symposium on Statistical Development website at [www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za))

<sup>3</sup> Report on Reducing Census Costs Meeting, Pretoria, South Africa 2001 (Document ASSD 2006/08 available on the 2006 Africa Symposium on Statistical Development website at [www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za))

<sup>4</sup> Report on Census dissemination in Africa, Pretoria, South Africa 2003 (Document ASSD 2006/09 available on the 2006 Africa Symposium on Statistical Development website at [www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za))



At the end of year 2000 when the Millennium Development Goals were adopted, African national statistical systems were still in a process of rehabilitation and revitalization due to initiatives taken at different levels (global, regional, sub-regional and national) and to the commitment of the international community. Nevertheless, national statistical systems in Africa still present a number of weaknesses: low political support, inadequacy of the legal and institutional framework for statistical activities, lack of coordination, weak management, poor working conditions and salaries, lack of priorities and programming, all resulting in statistics that are incomplete, of poor quality, often incoherent and disseminated too late and according inadequate formats. African statisticians face a big challenge to play a useful role in the achievement of the MDGs.

The Addis Ababa Plan of Action for the development of statistics in the 1990s (AAPA) adopted in 1990 by the Conference of Ministers of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa aimed amongst other things to reverse the decline of African statistics. Little progress made, almost fifteen years later, at the Second International Roundtable on Managing for Development Results held in Marrakech in February 2004, preparation for the 2010 round of population and housing censuses was identified as one of the six action areas identified as priority for improving development statistics for the future.

Birthing in South Africa in February 2006, the Africa Symposia on Statistical Development through a Programme on the 2010 Round of Housing & Censuses therefore seeks to redress a situation that will exclude Africa from influencing how the 2010 round of population and housing censuses will improve statistical information for monitoring Africa's development agenda and contribute to global dialogue and development in the continent in the context of NEPAD and African Union initiatives.

Against this backdrop, the main aim of the programme will be to facilitate the strengthening the role of African countries in the World Programme on 2010 Population and Housing Censuses; to strengthen collaboration on census-related activities, to develop strategies for African countries to fill the glaring data gaps that limit Africa's ability to monitor progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and finally to promote knowledge management in statistics and the pivotal role statistics plays in the development of the African continent. This objective will be achieved through:

1. Encouraging all African countries to undertaking a population and housing census in the 2010 round of censuses (2005 – 2014);
2. Reaching consensus on recommendations on revision of United Nations *Principles and Recommendations* from an African perspective;
3. Reaching consensus on core topics and tabulations of relevance to African censuses;
4. Focusing and fostering linkages in MDG-related and census campaigns; and,
5. Providing a platform for comprehensive exchange of experiences, countries' participation, technical assistance, information and data dissemination.

It is intended that this process carry itself through the entire period of the 2010 round of population censuses (2005 –2014), which timeously provides an opportunity to provide mechanisms for Africa to monitor progress made towards achieving the time bound Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

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## **THE 2000 ROUND: AN OVERVIEW FOR AFRICA**

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Africa is a heterogeneous continent with regard to the history of census taking. Very wide variations occur with South Africa for example conducting its second democratic census since 2001 while others such as Angola having never conducted a census at all since 1970.

The following section summarizes the main conclusions and lessons learnt in light of the implementation of population and housing censuses by African countries during the 2000 round. An assessment of the challenges faced by African countries in the 2000 round of censuses can be summarized as following:

- Financial and resource constraints,
- Lack of technical assistance,
- Logistics problems,
- Late funding is one of the major problems facing the African countries as they solely depend on donor funding for census operations, and,
- Skills shortages in demography field and analysis of PES results

In preparation for the 2010 round of population and housing censuses, the Economic Commission for Africa undertook a survey of African countries' preparedness for the 2010 round, and reviewed the unique experiences encountered in the 2000 round. Several findings emerge from this analysis as highlighted in the table below.

## The African Experience of the 2000 Round of Population and Housing Censuses

SAD Countries	Reference date of the most recent Census	Funding	Challenges of 2000 RPHC	Participation in the 2010 RPHC
Angola	1970	Government	No information available about this issues	Date unknown
Botswana	2001	Government	Communication problem Response fatigue Transportation problem Cartographic skill Insufficient telephone coverage in the country Lack of adequate skill	2011
Lesotho	1996	Government and UNFPA	Insufficient funding. Insufficient Transportation Insufficient data processing and cartography equipments. Lack of capacity building. Lack of Technical assistance	2006
Malawi	1998	UNFPA/CST AID Agencies	Insufficient funding	2008
Mozambique	1997	UNFPA/CST UNSD AID Agencies	Land mines Financial Constrains Censuses too expensive	2007
Swaziland	1997	UNFPA/CST UNSD	Inadequate technical staff Manual Mapping Lack of personnel with programming skill and data processing	2007
Zambia	2000	UNFPA AID Agencies DFID,JICA EU,Norwegian Government UNHRC, and Others	No information given	2010
Zimbabwe	2002	Others	No information given	No Information
Mauritius	2000	Government	Staff shortage Lack of funds and qualified human resources	2010
South Africa	2001	Government	Difficulty keeping pace with evolving census geography Problem development proficiency in usage of aerial photography Capacity building and staff retention Response rate of certain population group IT and scanning problem	2011
Congo	1984	UNFPA/CST UE	Improper financial planning. Experience difficulty in mobilizing funds from outside agencies. Displacement of personnel make difficult to collect data to some localities. Fatigue and time constraint – enumerators walk to areas that are inaccessible by car. Validation of results, government has doubts about the validity of data. Lack of experts to analyse data.	

<b>Democratic Republic of Congo</b>	1984	UNFPA/CST Foundation Hans Seidel Government Britannique	Financial constraints, logistic problems. Analysis problem	Date to be communicated
<b>Namibia</b>	2001	UNFPA/CST Spanish government, SIDA United Kingdom USA	Financial Assistance Technical Assistance Budget Transport Inaccessible Areas Boundary Disputes Underestimation of Household	2011
<b>Madagascar</b>	1993	UNFPA/CST UNICEF	Financial problems, logistical problem- have difficulty in retaining completed questionnaires. Delays in distributing questionnaires due to transport problems. Postponement of cartography work due to political tension. Experienced problems during coding especially in the smallest administrative units.	2006
<b>Tanzania</b>	2002	UNFPA/CST UNDP, DFID, JICA, Government of Japan	Funds War, Hunger Drought, Political issues that caused a number of postponements to the census date.	No information

<b>North Africa Countries</b>	<b>Reference date of the most recent Census</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Challenges of 2000 RPHC</b>	<b>Participation in the 2010 RPHC</b>
<b>Mauritania</b>	2000	UNFPA/CST World bank, European Union, Government of Japan, AFSED	Nomads areas Lack of financial resources Shortage of technical assistance Funding Training manpower	2010
<b>Morocco</b>	2004	UNFPA/CST Fonds Arabe pour development economique et social	Financial constraints Communication problem due to long chain of command.	(Entre 2010 et 2014
<b>Tunisia</b>	2004	Government	Transportation problem Unavailability of employed households during the day causes difficulty in collecting data. Difficulty in recruiting census agents in some localities.	2014

ECOWAS	Reference date of the most recent Census	Funding	Challenges of 2000 RPHC	Participation in the 2010 RPHC
Burkina Faso	1996	UNFPA /ESP UN, UNICEF Government	Coordination of census activities on the ground due to shortage of vehicles, bicycle was the alternative mode of transport used. Dissemination of results delayed due to analysis problems. Lack of skilled personnel.	2006
Cape Verde	2000	UNFPA/CST Government, Portugal, VE	Financial Resources Post-Census Analysis Data Collection in urban areas Human resources	2010
Cote d' Ivoire	1998	UNFPA/CST UNICEF, World Bank, French Cooperation	Lack of Funding	2008
Gambia	2003	UNFPA/CST World bank,	Lack of skill in demography Inadequate finding Funding and media	2013
Ghana	2000	UNFPA AID Agencies Other agencies DFID,JICA and the republic of China	Rapid growth in urban peripheries Scanning of questionnaires because first time using scanning technology	2010
Liberia	1984	UNFPA/CST EU	Funding Appropriate technology not available Logistics Infrastructure	2008
Mali	1998	UNFPA/CST UNICEF	Problems in cartography. Lack of financial planning- no prioritization of activities.	2008
Sierra Leone	1995	UNFPA/CST EU	Funding Technical Assistance Inadequate census education Shifting of census dates	1995
Togo	1981		Financial resources main cause of non- realization of RPHC.	2006/2007

East and West Africa Countries	Reference date of the most recent Census	Funding	Challenges of 2000 RPHC	Participation in the 2010 RPHC
Rwanda	1991	UNFPA/CST AID Agencies	Instability Huge population Food insecurity	Not Specified
Central African Republic	1988	UNFPA/CST EU,UNDP, UNICEF, China , Japan	Financial resources Mobilization of Logistics Dispatching materials Analysis team	2013
Uganda	2002	AID Agencies Government of Japan,DFID SIDA,EU,NORAD	Lack of Funding Cartographic work took long time leading to EAs of varying size at the time of enumeration Data processing took long	2012
Djibouti	1983	UNFPA/ESP	Djibouti lacks statisticians, demographers and sociologist because of international migration. Difficulty in mobilizing financial resources, lack of human resource.	2007

<b>Ethiopia</b>	1994	UNFPA/CST AID agencies UNDP	Lack of adequate funding Lack of adequate methodology of cartographic work. Separation and merging of administrative units	2007
<b>Gabon</b>	2003	UNFPA/CST UE	Difficulty in mobilizing funds for census operations	2013
<b>Kenya</b>	1999	UNFPA DFID,UNDP	Lack of resources financially and human  Fast changing technology	2009
<b>Seychelles</b>	2002	No information	Lack of accommodation for training census officers  Lack of human resources Lack of TA for demographic analysis Under coverage	2010
<b>Chad</b>	1993	UNFPA,USAID RFA	Political disturbances delayed cartographic work	2007
<b>Cameroon</b>	1987	UNFPA/ESP	Inability to mobilize financial resources. Country running on a deficit. Delayed dissemination of results. Insufficient funds for printing publications	Currently running 2005-2006
<b>Comoros</b>	2003	UNFPA/ESP PNUD,OMS,EU,UNI CEF,	Inability to mobilize financial resources. Lack of human resource. Delays in disseminating publications.	2013
<b>Burundi</b>	1990	UNFPA /ESP AID Agencies Banque Mondiale	Inability to mobilize financial resources. Lack of human resources to supervise census operations	2007
<b>Somalia</b>	1986	UNFPA/CST Italian Government	Prevailing conflicts Lack of institutions and intentional capacity Limited human resources	

National Statistics offices (NSO's) in Africa are mandated to carry out a census. With the exception of Burundi and Cameroon whose census operations are the responsibility of an external Census Bureau. Most African countries that conducted a census covered the main topics included in the recommended list for the 2000 round of censuses. Generally information was collected on core topics, which include education, migration, economic activity, and fertility, demographic and household characteristics. Certain exceptions occur where partial coverage was noted with respect to certain topics. Ethiopia and Malawi for example did not ask questions on migration. Seychelles and Rwanda did not include questions on fertility. How core topics are phrased in questions and how these questions are being asked remain yet to be strengthened.

All countries in Africa adopted a de facto census for the practical reason of avoiding the possibility of double counting. A common major problem for African countries relates to the estimation of the native population abroad.

Africa lacks documented evidence about the quality of conducted censuses in terms of complete coverage and capturing good data. The absence of basic measurement for the level of coverage and data quality would not allow users in African countries to assess the success of the census operations. The post enumeration survey (PES) as a tool to evaluate coverage and content errors, has been conducted by three countries only: South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia. Botswana and Zimbabwe did not conduct a PES because they felt that they had adequate quality control mechanisms put in place to guard against undercount. It is unlikely that other African countries conducted a PES.

Most of the African countries have made use of ICTs during the 2000 RPHC especially during data capturing through scanning devices. The experience of using optical mark readers has been a difficult one, even though they have proved to be faster in data processing. African countries note that using scanning devices has contributed to certain problems such as an inability to read certain sections of the questionnaire due to the sensitivity of the paper used, the costs incurred in acquiring the special paper and editing. A classic example is that of South Africa where the optical mark reader could not read text on the blue-coloured questionnaire. As a result a special blue lamp had to be shipped within 48 hours from overseas, an endeavour which had serious budgetary implications. Zambia on the other hand faced similar problems with the optical mark reader in merging household information. The optical mark readers also could not read questionnaires in many cases due to high moisture content or stain marks made by enumerators in the field. These experiences by South Africa and Zambia have been instrumental in guiding Lesotho's decision to successfully use the optical mark reader in the pilot census undertaken in preparation for the March 2006 population census. Nevertheless, most African countries that used new technology for the first time experienced problems in operating scanning machines due to a lack of proper training. Chad is the only country that did not use ICTs during census operations.

Dissemination and utilization of census findings is necessary to enhance planning and decision-making at various levels. Dissemination and utilization of census findings is still lagging behind for a number of reasons. Key amongst these relates to issues of confidentiality, delays in data processing and a lack of resources for printing. There are few African countries that are still using paper publication as the only dissemination tool such as the Comoros, Lesotho, Liberia, Seychelles and Rwanda. Most other African countries have an established communication and technology infrastructure in which they make use of all methods of dissemination including the



Internet and CD ROM to disseminate census data namely Ethiopia, Cote d' Ivoire, South Africa, Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

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## THE 2010 ROUND: PREPAREDNESS IN AFRICA

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This section provides an overview of Africa's preparedness to participate in the 2010 round of population and housing censuses amidst calls for more sound statistical information systems to monitor progress on Africa's development initiatives. The Report of the Friends of the Chair (2005)<sup>5</sup> on the Millennium Development Goals takes note of the fact that data submitted to the UN Summit for Africa are so severely limited that, in fact, they are likely to be more misleading than illuminating the progress that might have been made, or which is likely to be made, by African countries in reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

Most African countries have indicated a willingness to participate in the 2010 round of population and housing censuses. However, countries that have emerged from situations of conflict such as Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Somalia still face uncertainty with respect to undertaking a post-conflict census. This is one of the challenges that the African region will be concerned with in the coming years; to help mobilize resources, capacity and expertise to assist these countries to put in place plans for undertaking post-conflict censuses in the 2010 round.

There are specific concerns for the African region generally, concerning their participation in the 2010 round of censuses. Census is an expensive exercise and the lack of financial resources is highlighted as the biggest challenge for almost every African country. Egypt and South Africa are noted as the only African countries whose census is wholly funded by the state with no donor intervention.

The lack of interest from donors in funding census operations is mentioned as one of the challenges facing some of the African countries. Another problem is that governments do not give census a priority as a result most member states depend on donor funding for census activities. The delay in receiving donor funding causes delays during census operations. African countries are also experiencing challenges on mobilizing financial resources due to their respective country's deficit and debt burden. Capacity building is required to mobilize and train staff, and harness new technology in census operations. Many African countries are sparsely

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<sup>5</sup> United Nations (2005) Report of the Friends of the Chair on Millennium Development Goals Indicators.

populated and this makes fieldwork operations difficult to perform. Government is not giving NSOs enough support in terms of capacity building and infrastructure to carry census activities.

The preparedness of Africa to participate in the 2010 round of population and housing censuses will be strongly linked to Africa's ability to address the broader challenges of statistical development in Africa, namely; institutional reform, capacity building, leadership and management and funding and resource mobilization.

The preparedness of Africa in the 2010 round is also strongly dependent on critical regional coordination with the Economic Commission for Africa providing critical leadership for the implementation of the 2010 round of censuses in Africa.

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## THE 2010 ROUND: PROPOSED AMENDMENTS – AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

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The Symposium suggested the revision of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses (Revision 1)* in three areas:

- Core Topics and Recommended Tabulations
- Census planning and Management
- Promotion of Censuses: Making Value Visible

Through a series of working group sessions and plenary discussions, a number of recommendations were proposed that reflect an African position to the global process of reviewing and updating the current Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses. The African statistical community took into account certain considerations for the update of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses (P & R)*:

- Are the definitions and classifications of existing population and housing topics in the P&R adequate?
- Is there a need for the addition of new topics to supplement the global census recommendations to create a set of recommendations more appropriate for Africa?
- What are the implications of the recommended set of core topics on data collection at the national level, on data comparability and exchanges at the regional and international levels?

The basis for the update for African continent was set as:

- Clarity and precision of definitions (e.g. place of usual residence, ethnicity, citizenship, etc)
- Improved applicability (marital status, families and households)
- Increased policy relevance of topics (international migration and data exchanges, mortality etc)

- New methods and/or revised classification ( for example, on disability and human functioning)

This section therefore outlines broadly the recommendations made by the African statistical community on statistical development in Africa and more specifically on suggestions made for the revisions to the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses (P & R)* which would guide the 2010 round of population and housing censuses. Consideration is made of the limited financial capacity of African countries in conducting specific surveys, and given the importance of the monitoring and the evaluation of MDGs and PRSPs, these recommendations propose that African countries adopt the census as their main source of data to include additional questions in their censuses aimed at collecting data that will serve the national development agendas.

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## PART I: CENSUS PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

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The population and housing census is a significant source of the data in any country. It is therefore essential that it be well-programmed, planned for, adequately funded and efficiently executed.

On **Census preparation and Support (paras. 1.50 – 1.142)** it was recommended that:

- Countries should have a well-defined legal framework for population and housing censuses. (**paras 1.57-1.58**)

On **Funding and resource mobilization** as an additional view from Africa, it was recommended that (**par.1.61**):

- With regards the funding of censuses, countries consider reducing reliance on donor assistance since censuses are legally the responsibility of national governments. However, countries are encouraged to explore ways of establishing census-funding partnerships with the private sector, donors and civil society.
- Countries are encouraged to consider census fundraising and resource mobilization in the broader context of the national strategic plan for statistics in accordance with the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics, with the population census as an integral part.
- Countries launching their census operation, with a well-defined project document that clearly outlines all the phases of a census, and outlines the sources of funding as well as ensuring that the necessary human capacity is in place.

On the **Uses of IT** it was recommended that:

The role of IT and significant advances in this field in containing the cost of the census and enhancing quality cannot be overemphasized, and therefore encourage countries to (**paras 1.181-1.183**):

- Consider how IT applications can be adapted and effectively managed in all phases of a census in order to accelerate the census process.
- Carefully planning (**paras 1.52 – 1.53**), testing (**paras 1.119 – 1.121**) and extensive training (**paras 1.133 – 1.138**).
- Share technical experiences and to use IT as a data dissemination tool (**paras 1.247 – 1.253**).

On **Census Management**, it was recommended that:

- Countries should be encouraged to use internationally agreed standards and definitions in census operations (**paras 1.1 – 1.4**).
- As regards alternative designs it was recommended that vital registration systems should not replace censuses. However, African countries felt very strongly that the use of vital registration systems should be encouraged in conjunction with the census as far possible.
- Countries should strive to establish an integrated programme of data collection and compilation. This will require coherence of used definitions and classifications across censuses, surveys and administrative records (where used for statistical purposes) in a statistical system.
- Countries recovering from trauma and post-war situations have to be stabilized before the launching of any census operation. Conditions of collecting data have to be optimal.
- Countries should also take into consideration population movements, in particular the movement of refugees and internally displaced persons.
- In addition, countries should also take into consideration security concerns such as the existence of mining zones as well as ensuring those key infrastructures are in place. This idea should be further developed.

On **Census Evaluation** it was recommended that:

- To enhance the quality of data, countries should put in place well-defined quality control procedures and techniques and check the quality of materials used in census operations. Quality control should be exercised at every phase of the census. (**paras 1.78 and 1.257 – 1.262**).
- Countries reaffirmed the importance of post-enumeration surveys in evaluating coverage and in some cases content error in censuses. (**paras 1.270 – 1.275**)

An *additional view* presented by African countries was with respect to outsourcing of census operations. It was recommended that:

African countries should evaluate outsourcing operations in terms of cost, contractual arrangements, quality implications as well as technical requirements.

The Symposium acknowledged the range of technical and financial support of the United Nations system funds and programmes, other international agencies, and development partners and exhorts these organizations to extend their support to ensure the success of the 2010 round of censuses.

The Symposium further acknowledged ongoing dialogue in the global economy that gives impetus to the need for the timely dissemination of data. In this regard, the Symposium noted the need for the Principles and Recommendations to acknowledge the influence of regional and sub-regional coordination in encouraging measures and enhancing the production of timely, accurate and cost-effective data. Regional and sub-regional coordination will allow the exchange of experiences among countries and the exploration of new techniques in the planning, collection of data, analysis, dissemination and utilisation of census findings.



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## PART II: CORE TOPICS

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### *Person characteristics*

#### **1. Geographical and internal migration characteristics (par 2.18 to 2.59)**

##### *Place of usual residence (paras. 2.20-2.24)*

The Symposium recommended a clarification of the definition of a migrant as well as that of the usual residence. There should be a clear definition of ‘migrant’.

It is recommended that this be based upon a definition of usual residence relating to a period of 12 months.

A wide range of definitions of rural and urban was evident. In view of the importance of this classification it is recommended that African NSOs make every effort to come up with a standard definition to permit comparison.

##### *Place of birth (paras. 2.29-2.34)*

African countries considered a clarification of the place of birth and recommended that the concept of place of birth be regarded as the usual residence of the mother instead of the physical place of birth. In fact, in many African countries mothers have to move in urban areas to give birth (in hospitals) and the registers will record the urban area as the birthplace.

##### *Rural/ Urban (paras. 2.49-2.51)*

While recognizing the importance of the urban/rural distinction, this could be expanded to explain that a standard definition is important for allowing comparison. The Symposium expressed concerns about the difficulties of coming up with a common definition for all countries. African

countries distinguish between the two on a legal basis, some kind of administrative basis, or ‘common knowledge’ that is not easy to harmonize. Notwithstanding the above-mentioned problems, a standard definition would serve a useful purpose in facilitating cross-country comparisons.

## **2. Households and family characteristics (par 2. 60 to 2.84):**

### ***Relationship to head or other reference member of household (paras. 2.67-2.76)***

Recognition was made of the fact that in the African context, the head of the household is usually a man. The importance of the head of household was reiterated but for data collection purposes there was a need to use the concept of a “reference person” in view of the growing number of people managing families other than the head of the household. The term “reference person” is to be preferred to the term “Head of Household” as it avoids, for example, difficulties with absent income earners. The reference person should be a responsible adult identified during the enumeration.

## **3. Demographic and social characteristics (paras. 2.85 to 2.117)**

### ***Marital status (paras. 2.96-2.103)***

Never married as a concept was considered as suitable to prevent confusion when comparing with single it was mentioned that separated or divorced would call themselves single. The treatment of consensual unions should be left to countries, For example information about Consensual Union could be collected through the topic “Relationship to Reference person” rather than “marital status”

### **Non-core topics:**

Religion (paras. 2.109-2.111)

Language (paras. 2.112-2.115)

National and/or ethnic group (paras. 2.116-2.117)

Religion, language and ethnic group were discussed and their introduction in the census was left to the discretion of countries.

#### **4. Fertility and mortality (par 2.118 to 2.143)**

##### ***Fertility***

It was recommended that the fertility questions be asked to all women aged 12 years and above and that when asking about the last birth that the question should be asked to women aged 12 - 49yrs. A question should also ask the woman to specify total number of children.

##### ***Date of birth of last child born alive (paras. 2.134-2.136)***

Recall problems exist where last birth was several years ago. The data is justified by requirement for information on the date of birth of children born in the last 12 months. It is recommended that a cut-off date be adopted to reduce the respondent burden of collecting redundant data.

##### **Mortality**

Mortality was considered as an important issue to be included as a core topic in African censuses despite the fact that cultural reasons make it difficult for people to answer mortality questions in Africa. It was, therefore, recommended to leave it to the discretion of countries to include mortality questions in a census. In the meantime, statisticians should work out alternative ways of asking questions that could lead to the derivation of this information.

##### ***Deaths in the past 12 months (paras. 2.137-2.138)***

In some African cultures it is difficult to ask questions about deceased people. It is recommended that a standard approach be developed to overcome this problem.

### *Non-core Mortality Topics*

Maternal or paternal orphan hood (paras. 2.139-2.141): In view of the utility of this information as an indicator of mortality it is recommended that it be considered a core topic for Africa. There is not currently a need for this to be a **core** topic in other continents. In other parts of the world with comprehensive vital registration systems such information is derived from the above, therefore there may be no need to solicit for such information in a census.

## **5. Educational characteristics (par 2.144 to 2.164)**

### *Literacy (paras. 2.145-2.149)*

Because many people under the age of 10 are literate; it was recommended that for Africa, the age for literacy be brought down to under 5yrs The definition of literate in the P&R is as follows “a literate person is one who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his or her everyday life.” So when deciding cut-off points this definition should be taken into consideration. The minimum age for school going should be applied by UNESCO standards. The pre-school or kindergarten should also be included.

### *Non-core topics*

The topics “field of education” and “educational qualifications” (**paras. 2.158-2.163**), are very important in human resource planning. The symposium recommended that it be a core topic for Africa..

## **6. Economics Characteristics (paras. 2.165 to 2.247)**

For a definition of a child when it comes to employment it was recommended that Africa use the recent definition by ILO of under 18 years

## **Status in employment (paras. 2.226-2.235)**

The Symposium recommended distinguishing between public, private, and professional categories.

## **Institutional sector of employment (paras. 2.239-2.244)**

It is recommended that the treatment of the informal sector be further clarified taking into account recent ILO and SNA classifications to guide the collection of data from this sector ..

### ***Issues of concern under economic characteristics***

Questions on income should be avoided, as people are reluctant to answer such questions. Moreover, this could affect the responses to other questions. It was also felt that there was need to introduce a question aimed at measuring the informal sector as a CORE question, as well as what transportation modes people use to go to work. This could be helpful for planning purposes especially in crowded African cities. The current questions measure this. It just needs to be explained better as indicated above

## **7. International migrations (paras. 2.248 to 2.257)**

### ***Citizenship (paras. 2.254)***

The Africa Symposium recommended the inclusion of a question on current citizenship in addition to the existing citizenship at birth.

## **8. Disability characteristics (paras. 2.258 to 2.277)**

It was the opinion of the Symposium that disability tables should be presented by broad categories by type of disability. In this regard, it was recommended that the work of the Washington Group should be used to come up with a set of categories to be considered and used by all the countries.

### ***Household Characteristics***

#### **Ownership - type of (paras. 2.370)**

As this topic can be collected through the same question as tenure it is recommended that the two topics be combined.

#### **Water supply system (paras. 2.381)**

It is recommended that sufficient response categories be asked under this topic to distinguish safe and unsafe water sources.

#### **Furnished/unfurnished (new topic)**

The Symposium noted that there could be confusion caused by asking this question in relation to traditional houses in rural areas.

Other core household topics recommended by UNSD for the 2010 World Programme of Population and Housing Censuses (Number of rooms; toilet and sewerage facilities, rent paid, and information technology and communication devices) were endorsed by the Symposium.

### ***Non-core topics***

It was recommended that the topics on construction material of outer walls (para 2.304) and Materials of which specific parts of a building are constructed (para 2.421) be made core topics for Africa.

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### PART III: PROMOTION OF CENSUSES: MAKING VALUE VISIBLE

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In relation to the **operational aspects of population and housing censuses (paras 1.236 – 1.238)** an *additional view* presented by African countries was with respect to the dissemination of census results. It was recommended that:

Considering the importance of ICTs in census undertaking, that governments and development partners assist in this regard. This may refer to both equipment and technical assistance NSOs to build the required information infrastructure in order to disseminate censuses results The idea, under this bullet, though important is not linked to dissemination. Perhaps it should be brought up as a general recommendation. It should also record the fact that adding questions will add to costs and possibly reduce respondent cooperation.

Another *additional view* with respect to **operational aspects of population and housing censuses on the dissemination of results, (para 1.237)**

That NSO's should use the media officers to boost capacity for publicity and able to use statistics

On the **general uses of population and housing censuses (page 127)**, the Symposium took note of the under-utilization of census data by policymakers in Africa. It was therefore recommended that:

- The importance of censuses results in evidence-based decision-making should be clearly explained to governments, and other stakeholders including the private sector and civil society. There should therefore be intensive engagement and training of policymakers and other users on the utilization of census data. **(Para. 3.41)**

- That in the context of regional cooperation, African countries engage in South-South cooperation to exchange best practices and lessons learned.
- Ensure that an appropriate and up to date set of legislation is in place to ensure that the head of the NSO's can perform the required functions at an appropriate level. **(para. 1.57)**

- Have regular meetings with users to ensure that they understand the material available and such meetings should be supported with appropriate documentation. **(Para. 3.4)**
- Recognize that data users, like technical departments, are part of the National Statistics Systems and ensure that they both develop and grow together
- Produce material that better suit user needs **(Para 3.3)**
- Produce material in the format that users want or need. **(Para 3.3)**
- Countries should consider use of simplified interactive database as a valuable tool in advocating support for a census. **(3.34)**

On the *cost of data* and the issue of to charge or not to charge **(par. 3.39, page 126)** it was recommended that:

The suggestion made was for the words “or free” to be added to the end of the paragraph. It is the choice of the individual countries as to whether they want to charge for census data or not. **(1.247 or 1.237)**

On the *dissemination of the results* **(page 37)** it was recommended that:

- In terms of census products micro data can be disseminated provided that confidentiality is preserved. **(Para. 1.254)**



- The format of data i.e. e-data or printed should be determined by the needs of the data user. **Paras 3.5, 3.6 and 3.40)**

On census products and services, it was recommended that:

- Launching of products is a better way of creating awareness and improving usage. The launching of products should be included in the dissemination of results (**Para 1.236 – 1.256)**
- Websites should be user-friendly with well-defined procedures on how data can be accessed (**Para 1.238)**
- It is therefore recommended that information be disseminated through community newsletters, radios or TV. (Language etc. should be accounted for in this process and the literacy levels of the audience should be borne in mind. (**Para 3.21 and 3.38)**
- That a user-needs analysis needed to be conducted before dissemination could be done. This process allowed for products to be created that were specifically targeted at selected user groups. Communication messages could also be carefully crafted. (**Para 3.5)**

In terms of **User Needs (Page 117)** it was recommended that:

- Market segmentation is necessary in order to better target promotional material, products and messages to different user groups. (**Para 1.76 and 3.5)**
- Involve stakeholders in your plans, especially the government and media (**Para 1.74 and 3.6)**
- The user-producer dialogue should begin early in the process, and not at the time of dissemination (**Para 1.74 and 3.6)**
- Structured committees from advisory to administrative functions should be set up. This process needs to be carefully managed to avoid being used by some people as a platform to derail the census processes (**Para 1.74 and 3.6)**

- These committees should be structured around technical lines. **(Para 3.7)**
- User-producer consultation should be used from the planning stage. **(Para 3.6)**
- Ensure that the statistical agencies get the maximum benefit from this dialogue with stakeholders **(Para 1.73 –1.76)**

Additional views on user needs include:

- Providing training to the media on the use and interpretation of the census data. Misinterpretation or lack of their buy-in could prove disastrous. **(To be included in par. 1.237)**
- Being clear with stakeholders. Do not make promises that you cannot keep, or you will lose credibility. Explain why a question cannot appear in a questionnaire. **(To be included in Para 1.76)**

**On utilization of census information (Page 127)** it was recommended that:

- Data utilization is increasing but data should be accompanied with equipping users with the ability to *use* data. **(Para 3.7)**
- For increased understanding of statistics at any level you need a geographical dimension to this data. Provide maps with the data tables. **(Para 1.132 and 3.5)**
- Appropriate software (like IMIS) can provide trends across censuses since time series analyses are also important. **(Para 1.245)**