



Talking Points for

**Mr. Rogelio Fernandez-Castilla
Director
Technical Support Division**

at the

**Dialogue on Statistical Development with
International Agencies**

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Introduction

- I would like to commend Paul Cheung and his staff for organizing this dialogue, in which UNFPA is pleased to participate. This is a valuable opportunity for international agencies and National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to come together and exchange views on how they can improve their work, with a better coordination among international agencies, for the provision of a more effective support to the NSOs.
- The NSOs are very important partners for UNFPA. I am sure most of you present in this room have strong interaction with UNFPA Representatives in your respective countries. From New York, we strongly support this collaboration and would welcome any opportunity to strengthen it.

UNFPA support to data collection activities and guiding principles

- At UNFPA we recognize that reliable statistical information on population and development issues is essential for a wide range of purposes. For the past thirty years, UNFPA has played a lead role –operationally- in supporting capacity development in data collection and analysis.
- This support has benefited many countries across continents, particularly in conducting national population and housing censuses. This ranged from extensive support covering entire censuses' costs and technical support, to more specific and limited technical elements of capacity development, including cartography, census planning, data collection, processing, data analysis and data dissemination and utilisation, according to country situation and needs.
- It is therefore a common expectation that UNFPA continues to support (technically and financially), advocate and mobilize resources for data collection-related activities, including, analysis, utilisation and dissemination.
- Conscious that the need for information is increasingly felt by countries with commitments to report on progress toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as the targets from ICPD and other UN conferences of the 90's, a decision was taken by UNFPA Management to give high priority to UNFPA support to capacity development for data collection, especially for the successful implementation of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses.
- UNFPA approach is based on contributing to implement:
 - (i) ECOSOC Resolution 2005/13 of 22 July 2005 on *2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme*.

- (ii) ECOSOC Resolution 2006/6 of 24 July 2006 on *statistical capacity building*.

Modalities for UNFPA support to countries for population and housing censuses and other data collection activities

1. Support from UNFPA Country Offices:

- As done during the previous rounds of censuses, UNFPA, through its country offices, continues to play a lead role in financial and technical support to developing countries for the conduct of population and housing censuses; advocate and mobilize resources, as well as coordinate international efforts in supporting census activities within countries.
- Every UNFPA country office incorporates support to population and housing censuses and other data collection exercises in its country programme, in accordance with governments' requests, and the national context and priorities.
- Technical support to NSOs is provided through UNFPA's nine Country Technical Services Teams, which are located in every region: Africa (Addis Ababa, Dakar and Harare); Arab States and Central Asia (Amman and Bratislava); Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, Kathmandu and Suva); and Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico City).

2. Support from UNFPA Headquarters: The following capacity development workshops were organized for the successful implementation of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses:

- New York 24-25 February 2005: UNFPA organized collaboratively with UNSD an Advocacy and Resource Mobilization Meeting for the 2010 Round of Censuses. More than 60 participants from UN Agencies, Government Officials from Developed and Developing Countries, Academic and non-Academic Institutions, and NGOs. The meeting recommended that regional advocacy and resource mobilization workshops be organized.
- Yaoundé, Cameroon 21-25 November 2005: First regional workshop, organized by UNFPA, collaboratively with UNSD, for Sub-Saharan African Countries that have conducted or due to conduct their population and housing censuses from 2005 to 2007. More than 80 participants from 19 countries, including policy makers and experts from national statistical offices and/or census bureaus;

- Nadi Fiji, 20-24 March 2006: 2nd regional workshop organized by UNFPA and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). Census commissioners and senior statistical officers from 15 Pacific Island Countries (PIC) participated.
- Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 25-28 July 2006: 3rd regional workshop organized by UNFPA for 10 Asian countries that have conducted or due to conduct their population and housing censuses from 2005 to 2009. More than 70 participants, including policy makers and experts from national statistical offices and/or census bureaus.

Achievements of the regional workshops

- UNSD participated in all three regional workshops and introduced the United Nations *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2*.
- The regional Economic Commissions participated in the workshops, during which they made presentations on how they can support countries' efforts.
- Both workshops focused on problems pertaining to the different stages of census taking. They also discussed the reasons for the underutilization and poor dissemination of census results at the national and sub-national levels, as well as strategies for reversing the trend, and for addressing resource constraints for the 2010 Round of censuses. The workshops also redefined and asserted the value of population and housing censuses in measuring progress toward the MDGs, including poverty mapping.
- Participants have reported that these regional workshops have contributed to strengthening their capacities and have reached consensus on the importance of: Commitment and political will by governments for the successful undertaking of a census; Good advocacy in convincing donors to support a census project; and of census officials being able to effectively market census operations to donors, other external and internal stakeholders.
- To better support countries' efforts, UNFPA has developed a knowledge asset to improve the capacity of its own staff, especially those in UNFPA country offices. This asset will be revised and updated, and will be made accessible to the NSOs.
- A designated staff member of UNFPA country offices, participated in the regional workshops, to develop his/her own capacity for a better response to the needs of NSOs

UNFPA support to other data collection activities

- Collaboration with UNSD and the World Bank on the production of gender statistics through collaboratively organizing a meeting on the subject in December 2006. UNFPA supported the participation of some countries in this meeting.
- UNFPA has funded a special meeting of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) to look at ways to assist developing countries, especially NSOs, in improving data availability for monitoring the MDGs. UNFPA will also be partnering with IUSSP to assist in strengthening the capacity of national and regional training institutions, in order to contribute to develop a new generation of demographers and population analysts as the current level of training in demography is not sufficient to replace the present generation of demographers, most of whom are close to retirement age.
- To facilitate the use of DevInfo by countries and improve the usefulness of the DevInfo database system, UNFPA in collaboration with UNICEF through the UN Development Group Office (UNDGO) has provided support for the creation of data exchange modules to assist countries in the process of automatically uploading data from existing databases in DX-Stata, DX-SAS and DX-REDATAM into DevInfo format

Future plans

- In partnership with UNSD, UNFPA will support national efforts to coordinate sector statistical systems, including linking NSOs to line ministries, in order to enhance an integrated national statistical system.
- In 2007, UNFPA plans to organize four regional capacity development workshops for census taking for Arab States, Europe and Central Asia; Latin America and the Caribbean; and for sub-Saharan African countries with censuses planned for 2008 and beyond.
- Teaming up with UNSD and others, we will work in implementing the ECOSOC Resolutions and the recommendations that you made during this 38th session of the Commission, including developing countries' capacities to implement the UN Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing censuses.
- UNFPA plans to enhance NSO capacity to sustain the production of data for key issues (information will follow, through UNFPA offices in your countries).

UNFPA recommendations to NSOs

- To encourage NSOs to be innovative in mobilizing resources through advocacy and awareness creation on the importance of sound statistics for effective development planning, ensuring inclusion of population census operations in national budgets.
- Countries with incomplete or not reliable vital statistics and civil registration systems to measure maternal mortality through their population and housing censuses, using questions recommended by the United Nations *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2*, in Para 2.196.
- Countries to send their census data and report of census data analysis to UNSD and UN Population Division to avoid discrepancies in data. UNFPA country offices and UN agencies have received numerous complaints on discrepancies of UN published indicators with national statistics. This could easily be solved by sharing data bases and harmonizing estimation methodologies.

Finally, I would now like to encourage you to openly communicate with UNFPA Offices, myself and colleagues from UN and international agencies, whenever you feel there are areas for better coordination and more effective tell me, support to national efforts.

Thank you