

**United Nations Regional Workshop on the 2020 World Programme on Population and Housing
Censuses: International Standards and Contemporary Technologies**

29 May – 1 June, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Conclusions and recommendations

1. The workshop was conducted by the United Nations Statistics Division in partnership with the National Bureau of Statistics of Tanzania, African Development Bank, Regional and national offices of UNFPA, and UNECA. Population and housing census methodologists and managers from Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland and the United Republic of Tanzania participated in the workshop.
2. In the opening session, Mr. Srdjan Mrkić, Chief of Demographic Statistics in the United Nations Statistics Division outlined the importance of promoting international standards and guidelines and emphasized the major points of the 2020 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, as adopted by the ECOSOC in 2015; he also outlined the importance of the coordinated approach in support of national population and housing censuses as demonstrated by the organization of this workshop.
3. The opening statement of Ms. Hashina Begum, UNFPA representative in the United Republic of Tanzania, outlined UNFPA's commitment to ensure that no country fails to carry out population and housing census because of financial or technical constraints.
4. In formally opening the workshop, Dr. Albina Chuwa, Director General of the Tanzanian National Bureau of Statistics, noted that the countries represented in this workshop are at different stages of the next census preparation; however, she expressed her belief and expectation that this workshop will enhance the knowledge of participants on two recently released UNSD methodological volumes that will enable countries to prepare and plan even better. Dr. Chuwa also outlined the need to discuss best approaches to reduce census costs without compromising the quality of collected information.
5. Chairing the workshop rotated on daily basis. Mr. Srdjan Mrkić, UNSD, chaired on the first day; Mr. Asalfew Abera Gebere of Ethiopia, on the second; Mr. Macdonald George Obudho, of Kenya, on the third, and Mr. Seif Kuchengo, of Tanzania, on the fourth day.
6. The participants expressed their appreciation for the organization of the workshop. They emphasized that the workshop was timely taking into consideration the momentum that is being built in regard to the implementation of the ECOSOC Resolution on the 2020 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, stipulating that each Member State conducts at least one population and housing census in the period 2015-2024.
7. In that context, the participants outlined that the workshop is timely also from the point of view of the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the role it assigns to statistics in general and population and housing censuses in particular. The participants also noted the fact that the African Union inaugurated the 2063 Development Agenda, placing additional emphasis on the need for accurate quantifying instruments for monitoring its implementation. It was noted that the national development plans must be consulted while planning for the census questions are being designed.
8. The workshop welcomed the revised version of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing* as well as the revised *Handbook on the Management of Population and Housing Censuses*. The participants re-iterated that the *Principles and Recommendations* represent a cornerstone for national census planning and implementation of the 2020 round of population and housing censuses.
9. The workshop expressed specific interest in the establishment of Centers of Excellence for Population and Housing Censuses throughout Africa and encouraged their as prompt as possible installation and

functioning. The workshop also noted the initiative to jump-start the functioning of the African Census Coordination Committee, the terms of reference of which were adopted in ASSD meeting held in 2015.

10. In the context of the population and housing censuses in participating countries, the workshop noted with appreciation that the regional development partners, primarily UNFPA, provide substantive technical support by dispatching census experts as per requests from countries and providing other support services as well. It was recommended that UNFPA continues to play these roles including supporting countries in their resource mobilization efforts.
11. Discussing the timing of the population and housing censuses in the participating countries, the workshop noted that census dates are scattered all over the current census decade (2015-2024) which has adverse effect on regional and international comparison of national census statistics.
12. Quality assurance and quality control of all the segments of the population and housing censuses is prominently displayed and elaborated in both the *Principles and Recommendations* and the *Handbook on Management*, the workshop noted. In that context, it recommended that measures to ensure high quality of both the processes and outputs needs to be embedded in all the population and housing censuses in the participating countries in a permanent manner. In the context, comprehensive census quality assessments reports need to be produced by each country that undertakes a census in 2020 round, following the quality assessment dimensions presented in the UNSD guidelines.
13. In discussing the outsourcing of certain census operations, such as uploading the data into the “cloud” not directly under control of the census agency, the workshop noted that in such case the ownership of the data and access to them is becoming a concern.
14. The workshop noted that preserving census documentation in a coherent manner is not yet a routine in many countries. Consequently, it urged a stricter implementation of international recommendations and guidelines in that respect.
15. The workshop took copious note of the list of internationally recommended topics, definitions and classifications for population and housing censuses as presented in the revised set of principles and recommendations. The workshop concluded that certain concepts – such as, for example, usually resident population – might not be applicable in participating countries in the 2020 round of censuses due to a combination of increased migration and cultural and traditional approaches to family ties.
16. In the same context, the workshop recommended that the new concept of work, as adopted by the Conference of Labor Statisticians in 2013 requires additional methodological guidance for the implementation in the 2020 census round.
17. The participants discussed at length the issue of enumeration of individual’s sex, as a growing number of civil organizations are approaching statistical offices with request regarding the number and demographic profiles of transgender population. The workshop noted that African countries do not have a statistical definition for this purpose and are not able to provide this kind of statistics. Countries were urged to check their constitutions and where possible hold discussions with relevant stakeholders during user consultations.
18. On several occasions, the workshop raised the issue of enumeration of nomadic people in participating countries, outlining difficulties and increased costs in the process. The workshop concluded that further exchange of experiences in that respect between the countries would yield benefits and encouraged identifying the best and most effective solutions.
19. The workshop discussed at some length the definitions of urban and rural areas, as this represent a significant challenge when delineating urban from rural enumeration areas. It was underscored that countries worldwide developed their own definitions of urban and rural areas, and that an internationally

agreed definition, albeit discussed on many occasions, could not be successfully established. Therefore, the workshop concluded that each participating country will use its own definition of urban and rural areas based on national circumstances, such as population density, prevalent industry, availability of facilities and so forth.

20. In the group discussion setting, the workshop discussed the collection of disability statistics in the population and housing censuses. It was noted that this is usually a complex issue as it involves the need of solid training of the enumerators and the ability of respondents to correctly understand the questions and to provide information.
21. The workshop clearly underscored the fact that mapping is one of the critical phases of the census, both in terms of planning and execution. While considerable experience in the application of Geographical Information System (GIS) has been acquired in the 2010 census round, there is still a need to specifically focus on this census component due to the extensive workload and complexity. The workshop noted that all participating countries will use GIS technology for the purpose of mapping operations for the 2020 round of censuses.
22. In the context of mapping, the workshop identified several key challenges common to participating countries: loosely defined and overlapping administrative boundaries within the country; when using GIS mobile devices for mapping, energy supply is often an issue, as well as transferring information to the central storage point given the uneven internet coverage in countries; so is the availability of appropriate transportation, especially for remote and rugged areas. The workshop also concluded that in a number of countries the national geo-spatial capacity is not always as strong as necessary, thus making its use for census purposes more difficult. Therefore, it is critical to mainstream Geographic Information Technology into census process in a sustainable and coordinated manner at the national level.
23. The workshop strongly outlined that, despite all the challenges and initial difficulties and costs, digital mapping has extended long-term benefits and it recommended adopting this approach by all the participating countries together with more detailed exchange of experiences between them. In the context, the workshop noted and appreciated UNFPA's efforts to ensure a long-term arrangement with one of the satellite imagery providers at affordable prices and expressed its expectation that this process will be successfully accomplished as soon as possible – while at the same time encouraging a search for alternative providers of affordable satellite imagery.
24. In the context of the fact that the vast majority of participating countries intend to use tablet computers for their forthcoming censuses and that some of them are already well under way in terms of procuring them, the workshop, time and again, recommended and urged that the current initiatives by the regional development partners in enabling sharing of these devices between countries – and some exchanges are taking place at this very moment, as presented by Egypt, Ethiopia and Swaziland – are instituted as a matter of priority as they make considerable sense in terms of experiences in 2010 round of censuses. The urgent need to establish regional strategies and protocols for sharing these devices among several countries cannot be overemphasized.
25. In the same context, the workshop re-iterated the necessity to demonstrate the reduction of costs of the population and housing censuses, as a result of using contemporary technologies, thus providing strong rationale for having governments commit to funding the censuses notwithstanding the many advantages identified by the workshop related to the use of tablets, such as increased speed of data collection and dissemination, increased quality of data, real-time validation, to name a few.
26. The workshop took copious note of the experiences of participating countries that already used tablet computers in their national censuses and the many positive experience that were presented. The

workshop concluded, once more, that CAPI technology combined with tablet computers is the most efficient approach for African countries in the 2020 census round while at the same time recognizing that several issues still remain open for debate, such as the reuse of the devices once the census data collection is over.

27. In addition, the workshop recognized that the use of tablet computers is already quite widespread in the countries in the region for different surveys and agricultural and business censuses, as is the use of Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) technology. The essential motive for the use of CAPI and portable devices lies in the fact that it results in cost savings, faster processing of data and improved quality of resulting statistics. However, the participants also outlined some of the risks associated with the use of tablet computers for data collection that relate to the security of transfer of collected individual information, the need for encryption – which increases the costs significantly – and the possible loss, theft and damage of the devices.
28. The workshop concluded that the critical importance of repeat testing cannot be overemphasized, as the new approach is a complete novelty in terms of the use of new technology, devices and the sequencing and organization of census operations. Thus, as was demonstrated by a number of participating countries, as many as five pilots are needed to achieve a comfortable level of confidence in the design, operations and execution of paper-less population censuses.
29. The workshop also emphasized the need to exchange existing knowledge on the use of tablet computers in surveys and censuses, especially from the point of view of the functioning and features of the Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) and advantages and disadvantages of different software solutions used to implement this application. The workshop urged global and regional agencies to take active role in ensuring this exchange, including study tours to countries that already conducted censuses using tablet computers.
30. The participants noted with interest a documented occurrence of census under-enumeration as a consequence of using tablet computers for enumeration whereby enumerators, under pressure to conduct interviews in allotted time, would skip enumerating all household members in case of large households. Namely, the use of tablet computers is intended to reduce the interview time and enumerators were trying to live to that expectation.
31. The workshop took copious note of and expressed appreciation for the global and regional activities aimed at executing the 2020 World Programme of Population and Housing Censuses as presented by the workshop's organizers and partners, namely the United Nations Statistics Division - UNSD, the United Nations Population Fund – UNFPA, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa – UNECA, and the African Development Bank – AfDB. The participants welcomed this coordinated initiatives and the efforts invested by the contributing partners, both in the context of providing internationally adopted methodological framework for conducting population and housing censuses and in the context of directly supporting efforts to enhance national capacities in the field of census-taking.
32. Finally, the participants welcomed the organization of this workshop, emphasizing its value at this stage of the 2020 round of censuses and urged the organizing partners to organize follow-up workshops throughout the census decade.