UN Regional Meetings on Disability Measurement and Statistics: Some Observations

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UNSD Disability Statistics Programme in support of the 2030 Agenda

- UNSD organizing regional meetings to:
  - review national experiences in disability measurement, including challenges faced and lessons learnt during 2010 censuses
  - discuss compilation of disability-related SDG indicators for monitoring progress towards inclusion of persons with disabilities in development programmes
    - Asia (South and South-East) – July 2016
    - Caribbean – September 2016
    - Africa – November 2016
    - Arabic-speaking countries – March 2017
    - Central Asia and Western Balkan States – June 2017
    - Latin America – June 2017
## Regional meetings on disability measurement and statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total participants</th>
<th>Country representatives</th>
<th>Countries represented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-SE-Asia¹</td>
<td>July 2016</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>Sept. 2016</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Nov. 2016</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic speaking</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA &amp; WBS²</td>
<td>June 2017</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>June 2017</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>193</strong></td>
<td><strong>133</strong></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ¹- East/South-East Asia; ²-Central Asia and Western Balkan States
Participation in regional meetings

- **Asia (South and South-East) – July 2016**
  19 countries - Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, China (Hong Kong), Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam

- **Caribbean – September 2016**
  14 countries - Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Turks and Caicos Islands

- **Africa – November 2016**
  14 countries - Cameroon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Swaziland, and Uganda
Participation in regional meetings

- **Arabic speaking countries** – March 2017
  11 countries - Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, State of Palestine, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen

- **Central Asia and Western Balkan States** – June 2017
  17 countries - Afghanistan, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan

- **Latin America** – June 2017
  15 countries - Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay
Regional meetings

Some observations....
National practices

- Substantial increase over time in countries collecting data on disability
  - Increased from 19 during 1970 round to at least 120 during 2010 round

  *But also.....*

- Differences in national practices in disability measurement
  - Sources used for data on disability
    - Population & housing censuses main source for data on disability
    - Differences by region in use of household surveys and administrative records as source of data on disability
  - Methodology
    - Conceptualization and implied definition of disability
    - Terminology used (e.g., seeing, sight, vision)
    - Questions asked (type, wording, included items, response options)
    - Coverage (incl/excl of children, inst. population, homeless)
  - Use of international standards and guidelines
  - Operational aspects (type of respondent, mode of data collection)
Operational Issues

- Type of respondent (self-response or proxy)
- Oral translation of questions in the field
- Different modes of data collection
Data Sources

- Population & housing censuses
  - Complex operation with main objective of getting accurate count of population and major characteristics
  - Uses proxy respondents with likely effect on quality of data compared to self-response
  - Not enough time to devote to required training of enumerators
  - Not enough time for adequate probing to get more accurate information
  - May not be appropriate vehicle for collecting data on disability

- Household surveys
  - General lack of comparability between questions asked in different surveys and between the surveys and censuses
  - Some countries expressed caution on adding a disability module to other surveys because not all surveys are appropriately designed for disability measurement
    - Due to varying sampling frameworks employed for different surveys, results may not be comparable when modules are attached
    - Sample size has implications for disaggregation of by characteristics of interest and overall cost of survey
  - SIDS challenged in use of sample surveys to collect data on disability
    - Small population bases coupled with small numbers of identified persons with disabilities
    - Data disaggregated at country or high geographic level
Data Sources

- Administrative data sources
  - Fragmentation of sources with a lack of linkage and harmonization of their content
  - Coverage of administrative sources may be limited to a particular population of interest
  - Recognition that this source of data on disability should be strengthened and exploited
Reported challenges

- Translating and interpreting into local languages some disability terms
- Willingness of public to provide information due to stigma attached to disability, with potential for under-counting
- Difficulties in distinguishing degrees of difficulty particularly illiterate respondents
- General lack of qualified enumerators to collect data on disability
- For censuses, generally not feasible to provide required specialized training to enumerators
Some recommendations from regional meetings

- Harmonized approach to data collection
  - Use of ICF for standardized terminology and definitions
  - Washington Group approach (for and against)
  - Importance of adequately testing and adapting recommended questions and categories to national situations and contexts (to ensure relevance of resulting information)
  - Guidance on lowest age for asking questions on disability in census
  - Should there be a time reference for presence of difficulty?

- Guidelines
  - Develop guidelines with harmonized measurement standards for data collection, dissemination and analysis encompassing censuses, surveys and administrative sources

- Census questions should be kept simple and easy to understand
Some recommendations from regional meetings

- **Capacity building**
  - Comprehensive statistical capacity development needed in face of data requirements for SDGs monitoring
  - Enhance the capacity of national offices through appropriate training, e.g., on operationalization of ICF into census and survey questions
  - Technical assistance in data collection, analysis and dissemination
  - Strengthen communication between national and international stakeholders to identify needs for and how to implement training

- **Strengthening administrative datasets through harmonization and coordination with other sources**