

**United Nations Regional on the 2020 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses:
International Standards and Contemporary Technologies**
24-27 April 2018, Tbilisi, Georgia

Conclusions and recommendations

1. The workshop was conducted in partnership with the regional and national offices of UNFPA and was hosted by the National Statistics Office of Georgia. Population and housing census methodologists and managers from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan participated at the workshop. At the opening, the workshop was addressed by Mr. Tengiz Tsekvakva, Deputy Executive Director, National Statistics Office of Georgia, Ms. Lela Bakradze, Assistant Representative, UNFPA Country Office in Georgia and the representative of the United Nations Statistics Division. The workshop was chaired on separate days by Mr. Paata Shavishvili, Head, Population Census and Demographic Statistics Division, National Statistics Office of Georgia, Ms. Sebnem Bese Canpolat, Head, Demographic Statistics Department, Turkish Statistical Institute and Mr. Srdjan Mrkic, Chief, Demographic Statistics Section, United Nations Statistics Division.
2. The participants expressed their appreciation for the organization of the workshop and emphasized that it was quite timely taking into consideration the momentum that is being built in regard to the implementation of the EOSOC 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.
3. 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.
4. The workshop welcomed the revised version of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* 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. It also outlined that in the context of regional activities full compliance with the concepts and recommendations contained in these volumes has become of utmost importance.
5. The workshop also noted with appreciation the draft of the *Guidelines on the Use of Electronic Data Collection Technologies in Population and Housing Censuses*, as well as the draft *Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses*, outlining their value for the preparation and conduct of censuses in the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses. All four volumes were introduced and their contents elaborated during the workshop.
6. 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 partners, namely the United Nations Statistics Division–UNSD and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities–UNFPA. The participants welcomed this coordinated initiative 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 and build national capacities in the field of census-taking.

7. In the context of the forthcoming 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 supporting national census activities in many other significant ways. It also emphasized that similar efforts should be made in investing in capacity building of census personnel in these countries that could then deliver the necessary services, especially from the point of view of contemporary technologies for conducting censuses.
8. In terms of legal basis for conducting a population and housing censuses in the 2020 Round, the workshop noted that in several countries the necessary political commitment that would come in a form of a law or decree is still lacking and concluded that all efforts should be undertaken in order to resolve this issue in prompt and appropriate manner.
9. It was the assessment of the workshop that the majority of the participating countries are planning to apply modern technologies in the 2020 round with a goal of improving the quality and timeliness of census operations and census results as well as to reduce cost and improve operational efficiency and effectiveness. The workshop also concluded that most participating countries will apply a combined census taking model, combining paper questionnaires, electronic questionnaires on tablet computers and internet based self-enumeration questionnaires.
10. Thus, in terms of data collection design, the majority of the countries in the region have opted for the multi-mode collection method with a view to improving coverage and reducing cost. It was recognized that the multi-mode collection method increases operational complexity and requires sophisticated response tracking methods to minimize duplications and non-response. It was further emphasized that the collection design needs to be optimized for such type of collection exercise to manage mode effects and data comparability issues.
11. The workshop concluded that several participating countries indicated their continued interest and effort in using administrative sources of data for the purpose of generating census statistics. They also noted the many challenges in this regard, including discrepancies in definitions and concepts leading to inconsistencies with international standards; accuracy of the data; the completeness of the coverage; and the legal framework.
12. Participants noted with particular interest the list of core topics for population and housing censuses as recommended by the *Principles and Recommendations* and concluded that for most part the topics scheduled to be collected in participating countries correspond to the internationally recommended ones. However, the workshop also noted that some of the recommended core topics represent a significant challenge and that primarily refers to disability questions as the 2010 round experience points to substantial difficulties and obstacles in ensuring reliable and accurate data collection on disability using the population

and housing census. Another concern was raised by the participants in regard to the newly revised definition of work and the workshop concluded that there is a need for additional clarification regarding the implementation of the revised concept and urged UNSD to liaise with ILO in that respect.

13. The workshop also discussed the relationship between the population and housing censuses and agricultural censuses and took note of the UN recommendations on the topic, concluding that it should be fully acknowledged and implemented.
14. The majority of the countries in the region has experience in using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) and Internet-based self-enumeration in smaller surveys and field tests and refined their processes and procedures first before making a decision to use them in their censuses. The participants highlighted the importance of building capacity and expertise of the national statistical offices and using an incremental approach to the adoption of new data collection technologies.
15. The workshop underscored that one of the key challenges in employing a CAPI-based data collection is the challenge of recruiting technologically skilled and computer-literate temporary field staff. The participants highlighted the importance of providing adequate training both on the content of the questionnaire and on the use of the devices as well as providing sufficient technical support in the field. Another challenge was the need to develop alternative data transfer mechanisms and protocols in parts of the country where the telecommunications infrastructure is lacking.
16. The workshop raised the issue of the cost of acquiring tablets for CAPI-based data collection and the challenges associated with the limited life of the devices and finding justifications for re-using the devices for secondary purposes. The workshop encouraged countries to partner and cooperate with a view to pooling resources and sharing the devices for their respective data collection operations. The workshop called upon the UN system and development partners to explore such possibilities and be instrumental in terms of coordination and implementation of this type of cooperation.
17. A few countries expressed their concerns about the uncertainty of budgetary resources potentially jeopardizing their plans and preparations for using tablets for their 2020 round census. They have acquired capacity and expertise as well as tested their CAPI applications and systems yet are waiting on budgetary decisions. The workshop recommended that all efforts should be made by governments and development partners in terms of ensuring the timely availability of census budgets. In addition, the workshop recommended that NSOs should produce comprehensive census project documents and submit them timely to the government and donors to ensure their support.
18. The workshop underscored the centrality of digital mapping to census operations utilizing electronic data collection technologies. The countries in the region have experience in the application of Geographical Information System (GIS) during the 2010 census round and in subsequent surveys - however, the workshop also noted that in several countries in the region the use of GIS is not fully implemented and that may have adverse effect for the census in the 2020 round. In the context of international recommendation on the necessity to ensure the production of geo-referenced small-area census statistics in the 2020 round, the workshop noted the importance of geo-coding all buildings in the next census, thus enhancing the quality

and utility of census results as well as improving the efficiency and effectiveness of census operations.

19. The workshop noted the relationship between population and housing censuses and the generation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators. It recognized that census statistics are critical for producing SDG indicators and that a number of indicators cannot be produced without census data in the numerator or denominator. The workshop encouraged countries to map SDG indicators in terms of data sources, availability, timeliness and frequency.
20. The workshop emphasized the need to exchange existing knowledge on the use of tablet computers in surveys and censuses, especially from the point of view of testing the functionalities and features of the Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) and advantages and disadvantages of different software solutions used to implement this application.
21. 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 and sequential (that is, that each subsequent phase of the census being initiated only when the previous one has met the quality standards) manner. In that 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.