

**United Nations Expert Group Meeting  
on the Revision of the Handbook on Population and Housing Census Editing  
New York, 16–18 January 2019**

**Concept note - Draft**

## **Background**

The 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme, which was approved by the Statistical Commission at its forty-sixth session and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in its resolution 2015/10, acknowledges that population and housing censuses are one of the main sources of data for effective development planning and objective decision-making, particularly in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Programme is aimed at ensuring that each Member State conducts a population and housing census at least once during the period 2015-2024, taking into account international and regional recommendations relating to population and housing censuses.

The ECOSOC resolution establishing the 2020 World Programme requests the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) to prepare international statistical standards, methods and guidelines to facilitate the activities of Member States in conducting their population and housing censuses.

In that context, UNSD undertook the process of revising and updating its major international statistical guidelines for population and housing censuses. The first set of activities in this regard involved the revision of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* and the *Handbook on the Management of Population and Housing Censuses*. An Expert Group was established to undertake the revision of these two publications which were subsequently adopted by the Statistical Commission.

It is now planned to convene a new Expert Group for the specific purpose of revising another important publication containing international census guidelines—the *Handbook on Population and Housing Census Editing*. The revision aims to align the Handbook with contemporary census practices, including the use of electronic data collection technologies, and the standards and methods contained in the recently revised *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* and *Handbook on the Management of Population and Housing Censuses*.

Advances in technology and census methodology have created a variety of approaches to collecting and editing census data. The adoption of electronic data collection technologies, specifically the use of tablet computers and self-enumeration using Internet, is allowing for some real-time editing to take place during data collection, thus contributing to the overall improvement of data quality.

The revised Handbook is intended to provide guidance on both traditional editing (editing after data collection) and real-time editing during data collection facilitated by the use of electronic data collection technologies.

## **Organisation of the meeting**

UNSD is organizing the *United Nations Expert Group Meeting on the Revision of the Handbook on Population and Housing Census Editing*. The meeting is scheduled to take place in New York from 16 to 18 January 2019. It is expected that the meeting will be attended by about 30 participants including census editing experts from 15 national statistical offices in different

regions of the world and representatives of United Nations Regional Commissions, Eurostat, the World Bank and other United Nations agencies.

The working language of the meeting will be English. Interpretation services will not be provided.

### **Objectives/expected outcomes of the meeting**

The main objective of the Expert Group meeting is to review the revised *Handbook on Population and Housing Census Editing* and to provide further guidance on its content and structure with a view to ensuring that it provides countries with a reference document on contemporary census data editing methods and information on various approaches to census data editing.

Specifically, the meeting aims to:

- (i) review the revised Handbook to ensure that it provides relevant guidance on editing procedures and processes for traditional census editing (editing after data collection) as well as for real-time editing (editing during data collection where tablet computers and the Internet are used) based on good country practices;
- (ii) align the revised Handbook with contemporary census practices, including the use of electronic data collection technologies;
- (iii) align the revised Handbook with the standards and methods contained in the recently revised *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* and *Handbook on the Management of Population and Housing Censuses*.