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**United Nations Expert Group Meeting to  
Review Critical Issues Relevant to the Planning of  
the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses  
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**ILO data gathering  
from countries based on population census results\***

**By**

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## I. INRODUCTION

1. The ILO requests countries to provide a wide range of statistics in its annual and less frequent data gathering. Of the statistics requested of countries, those that one could expect to be available from a population census include the following:

### Economically active population (EAP)

- a. Total and economically active population, by age group and sex
- b. Economically active population, by level of education and sex
- c. Economically active population, by status in employment, branch of economic activity and sex
- d. Economically active population, by status in employment, occupation and sex

### Employment

- a. General level of employment, by sex
- b. Total employment, by branch of economic activity and sex
- c. Total employment, by status in employment and sex
- d. Total employment, by occupation and sex
- e. Paid employment by sex and detailed occupational groups (SEGREGAT data base)

### Unemployment

- a. General level of unemployment and sex
- b. Total unemployment, by age group and sex
- c. Total unemployment, by level of education and sex
- d. Total unemployment, by branch of economic activity and sex
- e. Total unemployment, by occupation and sex

2. In order to generate these tables, censuses would need to include data on, at least, the economic activity statuses of the population. These statuses (employed, unemployed and inactive) are determined on the basis of either a short reference period of one day/week or a long reference period of normally one year. The former, referred to as the labour force (LF) framework, assesses current activity, while the latter assesses usual activity. There are relative advantages in using these measurement frameworks as discussed in Hussmanns et al (1990), UNSD/ILO (2002) and ILO (2003).

3. Some countries use both measurement frameworks in their censuses, but most (especially the industrialised countries where economic activity of the population is more stable over the year) measure only current activity. In population censuses in which the questionnaire has a landscape format, it may be easier to measure current activity rather than usual activity because of the complexity of questions required to properly cover the longer period. (See paragraph 421 of UNSD/ILO, 2002) Some countries also measure “main activity in the last 12 months”, which is a variation from the international standard.

4. Some countries also collect data on the occupation, industry and employment status of each employed person. A few do not collect any data on economic activity statuses in their censuses or when they do collect these data, it takes a long time for them to process and publish the tables, sometimes never doing so.

## **II. AVAILABILITY OF STATISTICS ON ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION (EAP) FROM POPULATION CENSUSES**

5. The following table gives an indication of the extent to which data on EAP are available in the ILO's on-line database from population censuses and other sources.

**Statistics on economically active population in LABORSTA (<http://laborsta.ilo.org/>) by source and number of countries by region, 1994-2003**

Region (1)	Source				(5)
	Census (2)	Only census (3)	Household survey (4)	Official Estimates	
Africa	6	2	14	5	
America	5	1	29	5	
Asia	8	4	21	13	
Europe	7	3	38	7	
Oceania	5	3	3	0	
Total	31	13	105	30	

Notes:

1. Relates to countries and territories which have data in Laborsta for at least one year between 1994 and 2003.
2. Column 3 is a sub-set of column 2.
3. Except for column 3, countries may be counted more than once across sources.

6. Clearly, although for a large number of countries, we get EAP statistics from household surveys, an appreciable number of countries (31) have submitted statistics from their population censuses. Of these, 13 used only this source for submission of EAP statistics.

7. When assessed against the 153 countries that conducted censuses between 1995 and 2001, and by now should have processed the EAP data, it would seem that a substantial number of these countries either do not collect EAP data or have not submitted the statistics to the ILO. The latter is more likely based on the metadata on population censuses that we have collected from countries. The ILO therefore proposes to follow-up missing responses from these countries in the near future.

### **III. INTERNATIONAL STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF OCCUPATIONS**

8. As the custodian for the International Standard Classification of Occupations, the ILO is responsible for ensuring that it is regularly up-dated and developed to reflect the occupational realities in the world, and to provide guidance on its effective use for the production of reliable statistics. The current version of ISCO was adopted in 1988 and, since then, the developments in the economies of countries all over the world mean that changes of some type are necessary in ISCO-88 to reflect them. The 17<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Labour Statisticians (December, 2003), in adopting a resolution to update ISCO-88, recommended that the changes in the classification should not affect its basic principles and structure but should take the form of new occupational groups in some areas and improved descriptions in others (ILO, 2004). The updating process will be carried out taking into consideration the experience gained in applying ISCO-88 in countries as well as feedback from countries. The exercise is being carried out in collaboration with the Expert Group on Classifications of the UNSD. It is expected that the updated version will be ready in 2008 so that countries can take it into consideration in their work for the next round of Population Censuses. Further details can be obtained from the website of the ILO Bureau of Statistics (<http://www.ilo.org/stat>).

### **IV. Conclusion**

9. In conclusion, population censuses are a strategic source for EAP statistics but there is need for countries to accelerate their processing of these statistics and to submit them to the ILO in response to ILO requests.

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