

**United Nations Expert Group Meeting to Review Critical Issues Relevant to the Planning
of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses
15-17 September 2004
United Nations, New York**

Organization of work

Wednesday, 15 September 2004—Conference Room 5

Registration of participants (8:30 - 9:30 a.m.)

Morning session (9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

Opening

Introductory remarks
Purpose of the meeting

1. Emerging issues and core topics

As the 2000 census decade comes to an end, experts have raised the need to update selected sections of the current *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* as well as to supplement the publication by providing guidelines on emerging issues. Issues such as general mortality, including mortality due to HIV/AIDS and maternal mortality; human functioning and disability; ethnicity and indigenous peoples; and international and internal migration, among others have been raised. The presentations will provide suggestions on activities for updating the relevant sections of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 1* as well as a provisional list of core census topics for discussion and consideration. The *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 1* will serve as a primary reference document for the session.

Presentations

Discussion and recommendations:

- From a national and regional point of view, what are some of the main issues that emerged during the 2000 round of censuses for which improved statistics are needed?

- To what extent does the suggested list of core topics meet current data needs at the national and international levels?
- What changes are needed in the *Principles and Recommendations* to better address these emerging issues?
- What actions should the Expert Group take to ensure that the update includes these key issues?

Relevant Documentation:

- Topics of emerging policy relevance and suggested minimum and essential census topics: Implications for updating the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* (ESA/STAT/AC.98/1)
- Considering issues related to the collection of information of disability, maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS mortality in the census (World Health Organization) (ESA/STAT/AC.98/10)
- ILO data gathering from countries based on population census results (ESA/STAT/AC.98/12)
- Critical Issues Relevant to Population and Housing Censuses in the ESCWA Region (ESA/STAT/AC.98/15)
- Emerging Issues and Core Topics, Dissemination of Census Data, and use of Technology in Census Field Communication: Comments from Australia (ESA/STAT/AC.98/16)

Background Documentation:

- *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*, Revision 1 (1998)
- Suggestions of topics concerning ageing for inclusion into the 2010 round of censuses (United Nations Division for Social Policy and Development, DESA) (ESA/STAT/AC.98/6)

Lunch break (1:00 - 3:00 p.m.)

Afternoon session (3:00 - 6:00 p.m.)

2. Alternative approaches to traditional census taking

Various alternative approaches to traditional census taking have gained popularity in recent years. The session will provide an overview of various approaches to census taking and present specific key features of each approach and their rationale. The meeting will deliberate on activities necessary to determine the extent to which the *Principles and Recommendations* should be modified or updated to take into account these new approaches.

Presentations

Discussion and recommendations:

- What are the strengths or/and weaknesses of each of these designs vis-à-vis the traditional census approach which is characterized by individual enumeration, universality within a defined territory, simultaneity and defined periodicity?
- What are the technical properties of these designs?
- How portable is each of the above mentioned designs to countries under different conditions? Are there minimum requirements for a country to successfully adopt and implement the various designs?
- To what extent should the *Principles* and *Recommendations* consider intercensal survey programmes?
- What actions should the Expert Group take, if any, to ensure that the update of the *Principles* and *Recommendations* addresses alternative approaches?

Relevant Documentation:

- Alternative Census Designs: An Overview of Issues (ESA/STAT/AC.98/2)
- Statement from Peru (ESA/STAT/AC.98/5)
- The 2008 Israel Integrated Census of Population and Housing (ESA/STAT/AC.98/9)
- A proposal under study as part of the planning of the 2010 Mexican Population and Housing Census (ESA/STAT/AC.98/10)

Thursday, 16 September 2004—Conference Room 3

Morning session (9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

3. Reviewing national experience and lessons learned in the use of information technology (IT)

The use of technology is pervasive in many areas of human endeavor and census activities are no exception. There is a common perception among census practitioners that information technology (IT) would expedite various census activities and in some cases minimize error and improve the quality and dissemination of census results. There is however, a dark side to this story: if IT is not properly used, it can derail certain census activities. The session will review national experiences and lessons learned in the use of IT in censuses. These will include, among others, global position systems (GPS) in census mapping, handheld devices in data collection, scanning technologies, warehousing and data mining; dissemination media; internet in data collection, entry and dissemination; geographical information systems (GIS) in census planning, data collection and dissemination. The meeting will make recommendations regarding the next steps to be taken by the Expert Group in assessing the use of IT in censuses. The recommendations of this session will be taken into consideration in the revision and updating of the *Principles and Recommendations*.

Presentations

Discussion and recommendations:

- What strategies can be adopted in the area of IT to improve timeliness and efficiency of census operations?
- What are the salient lessons learned from countries that have used IT in the last census round?
- How should the United Nations Statistics Division facilitate exchange of experiences between countries and promote best practices in the use of IT?
- To what extent should the *Principles and Recommendations* provide guidance on use of IT in censuses, given the dynamic innovations in this area? What other strategies and approaches might be explored?

Relevant Documentation:

- Integration of GPS, Digital Imagery and GIS with Census Mapping (ESA/STAT/AC.98/14)
- The Use of Hand Held Device in the Muscat Governorate (ESA/STAT/AC.98/7)
- Modern Means and Technology Used in the Oman Census Programme (ESA/STAT/AC.98/8)

Lunch break (1:00 – 3:00 p.m.)

Afternoon session (3:00 - 6:00 p.m.)

4. Promotion, usage and dissemination of census results

What is the use of conducting a census if the data are not disseminated successfully? The session will focus on the elements of a successful census data dissemination strategy as well as the competing needs for census data at the national, regional and international levels. The meeting will also provide an opportunity to deliberate on some of the challenges inherent in using census data for non-statistical purposes such as the production of voter registers and identification cards. In addition, the session will assess the role of the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* system in the collection and dissemination of census data. The meeting will make recommendations on strategies to strengthen the promotion and dissemination of census results that will be submitted to the 36th Session of the Statistical Commission. These recommendations will also be taken into account in the drafting a handbook on dissemination strategies of population census data in 2005/2006.

Presentations

Discussion and recommendations:

- What actions does the Expert Group recommend for promoting best practices in dissemination?

- How can the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* system better contribute to ensuring the international exchange of census data?
- How can national strategies maximize access to information while ensuring the confidentiality of individual responses?
- The importance of historical preservation and archiving as well as data accessibility, considering national vested interests and international exchange, will be considered.

Relevant Documentation:

- Non-statistical use of census enumeration (ESA/STAT/AC.98/3)
- Collection and dissemination of national census data through the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* (ESA/STAT/AC.98/4)

Friday, 17 September 2004—Conference Room 3

Morning session (9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

5. Delineation of priorities and terms of reference for the Expert Group, and discussion of the draft report

Given the scope of the United Nations Statistics Division decennial census programme, the Statistical Commissions requested at its 35th Session that the Expert Group set clear priorities. What should these priorities be? At this meeting, the Expert Group will prepare draft terms of reference which will guide future work of the Expert Group in relation to the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme. The draft report of the Expert Group will also be discussed and final recommendations will be adopted for submission to the 36th Session of the Statistical Commission. The meeting will have before it the inputs provided by the Symposium on the draft resolution on the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme as well as the relevant sections of the report of the 35th Session of the Statistical Commission.

Presentations

Lunch break (1:00 – 3:00 p.m.)

Afternoon session (3:00 - 6:00 p.m.)

5. Delineation of priorities and terms of reference for the Expert Group, and discussion of the draft report (cont.)

Conclusion

Approval of final recommendations