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**Operational aspects of census taking in the ESCWA region:
Results of ESCWA questionnaire***

By

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In support of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA) carried out a survey to determine selected operational plans in the conduct of censuses in ESCWA region. A questionnaire was administered to the 13 ESCWA member countries (Annex 1). A total of 12 out of 13 ESCWA countries replied.¹ This paper presents the results of the survey.

2000 Round of population and housing census in ESCWA region

In 10 out of 12 ESCWA countries, the population census is conducted by the national statistical office or institute. On the contrary, the census operation is assigned to the Ministry of Economy in both Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

With the exception of Lebanon, all ESCWA countries carried out a census in the 2000 round period (1995-2004), with two censuses taking place in 1995 and five at the end of 2004 (Table 1). Nine countries undertook their census throughout the month period of September-December; two in April (Bahrain and Kuwait) and one (Qatar) in March.

Table 1. 2000 Round census date in ESCWA countries

Country	Date of census
Bahrain	7 April 2001
Egypt	19 November 1996
Iraq	16 October 1997
Jordan	2 October 2004
Kuwait	20 April 1995
Lebanon	--
Oman	7-8 December 2003
Palestine	10 December 1997
Qatar	17 March 2004
Saudi Arabia	15 September 2004
Syrian Arab Republic	22 September 2004
United Arab Emirates	15 December 1995
Yemen	16 December 2004

¹ Lebanon is the only country who did not respond to the questionnaire, as there is no act to carry on a census within the country since 1932.



Clearly, all ESCWA countries collected data on the topics of demography, education, economic activity, household and family. Table 2 shows that only one country (Jordan) has not included questions on fertility and mortality, and two countries (Egypt and Kuwait) have not considered internal migration into their census. Additionally, seven out of the 12 countries used the census as a source of information on international migration; but only one country (Kuwait) has not covered disability in its 2000 round census. Two countries, namely Jordan and Palestine, also noted that they included questions on durable goods in their census.

With the exception of Iraq, 11 countries made use of information technologies throughout the census operations. Seven countries included emerging technologies during census mapping, and six countries during data capturing. Nine countries, on the other hand, considered IT as important in dissemination of census data. Only two countries (Oman and Yemen) utilized, however these technologies during data collection.

Countries had different methods of data dissemination. All countries used printed paper publications; some countries used electronic channels such as CD-ROMs and diskettes (9 countries), and others used databases (6 countries). Seven countries, however, responded to have disseminated their census results on the internet.

Table 2. Census topics included in the 2000 Round

Country	Geography	Demographic	Education	Migration	Household and family	Fertility and mortality	Economic activity	Disability
Bahrain	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Egypt		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Iraq	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Jordan	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Kuwait		✓	✓		✓		✓	
Oman	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Palestine	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Qatar	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Saudi Arabia	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Syrian Arab Republic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
United Arab Emirates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Yemen	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓



All ESCWA countries are willing to participate in the 2010 Round of population and housing censuses. 6 out of 12 countries will conduct their next census in 2010; two countries in 2007 and two in 2014; one country is planning to take its census at the beginning of the 2010 round i.e. in 2005 (United Arab Emirates); and one country (Egypt) in 2006. Additionally, ESCWA countries are planning to carry out their census during the same month of the 2000 round. (Table 3)

Table 3. 2010 census round

Country	Date of next census
Bahrain	2010
Egypt	21 November 2006
Iraq	17 October 2007
Jordan	2014
Kuwait	20 April 2010
Oman	2010
Palestine	10 December 2007
Qatar	17 March 2010
Saudi Arabia	2010
Syrian Arab Republic	2014
United Arab Emirates	5 December 2005
Yemen	December 2010

With regard to possible issues to be covered in the 2010 round of population and housing censuses, all ESCWA countries suggested that the 2010 round should cover the use of IT in census. 8 out of 12 countries also thought that issues of dissemination of census results, and publicity campaign need to be addressed; all but three countries thought that the evaluation of coverage should be included as well.

With the exception of Kuwait, all countries considered that access to modern technologies should be included as a topic in the next census; however only three countries suggested including agriculture; both the informal sector and environment were considered by four and five countries respectively, as new topics for the next census round. (Table 4)

Five out of twelve countries reported that they intend to use short and long form questionnaires during data collection. Five countries are also likely to use mixed household surveys and administrative registers as alternative sources of data on population and housing.

Seven out of the twelve countries requested assistance in data collection and processing. Equally five countries needed help in census topics and census mapping; and requests were made by three countries on census management and data dissemination.



Table 4. Topics to be covered in the 2010 round on population and housing censuses

Country	Informal sector	Environment	Agriculture	Access to modern technology
Bahrain	✓	✓		
Egypt				✓
Iraq				✓
Jordan				✓
Kuwait				✓
Oman	✓	✓		✓
Palestine	✓		✓	✓
Qatar			✓	✓
Saudi Arabia		✓		
Syrian Arab Republic	✓	✓	✓	✓
United Arab Emirates		✓		✓
Yemen				✓

Future work in population and housing censuses in the ESCWA region

There is clearly a trend among member countries towards strengthening the dialogue between users and producers of census data, and to include the users in the preparatory phases of census planning and design. Egypt has done so during a national workshop in preparation for its next census planned in 2006. The workshop, held in collaboration with ESCWA, ILO and UNFPA aimed at revising the methodology of census taking in Egypt. A number of key users of the public and private sectors were invited to share views and concerns in relation to census issues. Throughout the workshop, consultations were made with the different stakeholders to determine what data are needed, and how they can benefit from their use.

Countries will continue to include questions on economic characteristics of the population in their census, guided by the latest ILO resolutions and recommendations in that regard. Three countries namely Jordan, Syria and Yemen, considered questions, which are far less in conformity with the concepts and definitions of the UNSD-ILO “Technical Report on Collection of Economic Characteristics in Population and housing Censuses”. Moreover, countries are likely to include the questions on disability, which are being considered by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics.

The new technologies such as the use of hand-held devices in enumeration and the scanning of census forms were also considered by countries as important in census operations. Oman has done so in its 2003 census, and Egypt will be using the Optical Character



Recognition (OCR) in its 2006 census. The ultimate objective is to improve quality and coverage of data, taking into account costs and timeliness.

With regard to data dissemination, the increasing trend among countries is to improve the utilization of census data and outputs, by making it available on the internet, and other electronic channels. There is also a concern to improve the publicity campaign during census.

Finally, post-enumeration is recorded as key issue in the next round of population and housing censuses. Jordan and Egypt are planning to carry out this method in their next census.

ESCWA planned activities in relation to 2010 Round of population and housing censuses

The Commission is planning a series of activities in preparations for the 2010 round.

Establishment of ESCWA Trust Fund on population and housing censuses

At the request of the Statistics Committee, at its six session held in October 2004, ESCWA established a Trust Fund to support the work on population and housing censuses in the region. The Trust Fund will be used for travel, consultation, training and advisory services for member countries in the development of standards and methodologies to ensure the successful implementation of the 2010 World Programme on population and housing censuses. In this context, ESCWA is considering pledging of financial contributions from member countries; in this context Oman, through its Ministry of Economy, has provided funds in the amount of 50,000US Dollars.

First meeting of ESCWA taskforce on population and housing censuses, Beirut 14-15 November 2005

ESCWA Statistics Committee recommended, at its six session, that a taskforce be formed to coordinate the efforts of member countries in planning the next round of population and housing censuses. After deliberations with members of the Statistics Bureau, Oman has been selected to act as the chairperson for this taskforce. The taskforce is expected to set its terms of reference, at its first meeting to be held in November 2005 to guide the work in this area. In particular, the taskforce will revise and update the UN Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses for 2010 Round, and agree on core set of topics and outputs that should be collected from population and housing censuses, to reflect the specificity of the region.

Expert group meeting on migration statistics, Beirut 16-18 November 2005

The expert meeting is organized in collaboration with International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Statistical



Division (UNSD), Organization of the Islamic Conference (SESRTCIC), UNFPA, the League of Arab States (LAS), and the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) on "International migration statistics". The main objectives are:

- (a) To familiarize the participants with issues concerning concepts and measurement, data collection systems and data availability, quality, comparability on international migration statistics, including international labour migration, and modules on labour migration in labour force sample surveys;
- (b) To assess the feasibility of implementing the United Nations Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration. Particular attention will be devoted to the on-going international work on definitional and methodological issues and the process for the 2010 World Programme of Population and Housing Censuses' Recommendations

Expert group meeting on new techniques in conducting population and housing censuses-in support of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses

The meeting is planned in 2006, and is expected to review and discuss new census methodologies developed by member countries to carry out their population and housing censuses.



Annex 1

**Questionnaire on the
2010 World Programme of Population and Housing Censuses**

Kindly complete the questionnaire and return it to Ms. Nadine Shaar via email at shaar@un.org or fax +961-1-981510. The deadline is August 5, 2005

Country: _____

Name of Respondent: _____

Function: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

This questionnaire is aimed at:

- Sharing experiences and lessons learned from the 2000 Round of Population and Housing Censuses
- Providing a series of critical issues and new challenges in the region with respect to the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses.

Your responses are highly appreciated as a contribution to the preparation of a regional position in the framework of the 2010 RPHC to be presented at the Expert Group Meeting on Population and Housing censuses, 22-26 August 2005 in New York.

What kind of institution is in charge of conducting censuses in your country?

- The National Statistical Office/Institute
- Census Bureau
- Other, please Specify _____

Part I: The 2000 Round of Population and Housing Censuses (1995-2004)

No Yes

1. Did your country conduct a census during the 2000 round?

If No, go to question 7.

2. When did your country conduct the census (dd/mm/yy)? _____



3. Did your country collect data on the following topics? (*Tick as many as are relevant*)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geography (internal migration) | <input type="checkbox"/> Household and family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demographic | <input type="checkbox"/> Fertility and mortality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Activity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International migration | <input type="checkbox"/> Disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify _____ | |

4. Did your country make use of Information Technologies (IT) during:

- | | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Census mapping | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Data collection | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Data capture | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Data dissemination | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Did your country make use of these dissemination methods? (*Tick as many as are relevant*)

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paper publications | <input type="checkbox"/> Internet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CD-ROM/Diskettes | <input type="checkbox"/> Databases |

6. What are the critical issues/problems that you have encountered during the 2000 Round?

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

Part II: The 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses

7. When is your country planning to conduct the next census? (dd/mm/yy)?

8. Is your country willing to participate in the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses²?

² The goal of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, as adopted by the UN Statistical Commission in March 2005 is to i) agree on a set of accepted international principles and recommendations governing the conduct of population and housing censuses; ii) conduct a population and



Yes No (go to question 13)

If No, what are the impeding factors?

- Human resources Financial resources
 Equipment and software Political factors
 Others, please specify _____

9. What issues do you think should be covered in the 2010 Round?

- Evaluation of coverage Publicity campaign
 Use of modern technologies in data collection and processing
 Dissemination of census results

10. What additional census topics do you think should be included in the 2010 Round?

- None Informal sector Environment
 Agriculture Access to modern technology (internet, PCs, mobile)
 Others, please specify _____

11. Does your country intend to use short and long form during data collection?

Yes No

12. Does your country need assistance in any of these areas? (*Tick as many as are relevant*)

- Census management Census mapping
 Census topics Data collection & processing
 Data dissemination
Others, please specify _____

13. Does your country intend to use alternative data sources to collect information on population and housing?

housing census at least during the period 2005-2014; iii) disseminate census results in a timely and comprehensive manner.



-
- Household surveys Registers/Administrative sources
 A combination of too Others, please specify _____

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION