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2006 United Nations Expert Group Meeting on the
2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses
10-14 July 2006
United Nations, New York

Report of the Expert Group Meeting on the
Principles and Recommendations for Housing Censuses*

New York, 5 – 8 June 2006

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**United Nations Secretariat
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Statistics Division
United Nations Expert Group Meeting on the
Principles and Recommendations for Housing Censuses
5 – 8 June 2006
United Nations, New York**

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A. Introduction

Background and objective of the Meeting

1. The United Nations Expert Group Meeting on the Principles and Recommendations for Housing Censuses was convened in New York on 5-8 June 2006. The Expert Group Meeting was organized by the Demographic and Social Statistics Branch of the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- (i) Review and agree on proposed changes to the text of the current *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses Rev 1* pertaining to housing censuses;
- (ii) Identify and elaborate on any issues that are not adequately covered in the current version of the *Principles and Recommendations*; and
- (iii) Adopt draft text of the housing census recommendations for submission to the Expert Group Meeting to be held in July 2006 (for an elaborated statement of purpose of the meeting, see information flyer for the expert group meeting attached as Appendix A).

2. The meeting was attended by twelve experts from: the Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, China, Finland, Indonesia, Philippines, South Africa, Uganda, USA; the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and United Nations Human Settlements Programme/Habitat.

Opening session

3. The meeting was opened with a message from the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division, Mr. Paul Cheung, which was read on his behalf by Mr. Jeremiah Banda, Chief of Demographic and Social Statistics Branch. The Director called upon the group to react to and reach an agreement on proposed changes to the text of the current *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* pertaining to the latter. He in addition, invited the meeting to specifically review the current United Nations recommendations and recommend actions, including but not limited to (i) classification of living quarters; (ii) core and additional topics; and (iii) recommended tabulations.

Organization of the Meeting

4. As laid out in the Organization of work (Appendix B), the meeting was structured along the following main topics:

- Proposed changes to the housing census section of the United Nations *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Rrev.2*
- Housing topics
- Recommended tabulations.

5. Papers were presented under each topic (see Appendix B for the list of papers including background documents). The papers are available on the United Nations Statistics Division, at:

http://unstats.un.org/United Nations Statistics Division/demographic/meetings/egm/HousingCensusEGM06/list_of_docs.htm.

6. Discussions were structured in a way that progressively led towards the development of the Expert Group’s recommendations to the July 10-14 Meeting to be held in New York.

7. The meeting’s sessions were chaired by Ms. Kelsie Dorsett of the Bahamas; Ms. Rosaline Hirschowitz of South Africa; Mr. Martti Lujanen of Finland; and Ms. Rosemary Bender of Canada. The Rapporteur for the meeting was Ms. Carol Van Horn of the United States of America.

B. Proposed changes to the housing census section for inclusion in the United Nations *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses rev.2*

8. In setting the scope for the deliberations of the Meeting, the United Nations Statistics Division submitted and presented a paper consisting of four parts. Part one focuses on proposed changes of current classifications. Part two discusses the revisions related to core and additional topics. Part three introduces the concept of recommended tabulations for housing censuses as a new international standard. Part four presents four issues that are partly included or not included in the current draft revision. These four issues (presented as five separate contributions) are proposals for expanding the coverage of the housing census in relation to consumer durables; information and communication technology; a better reflection on environmental issues and security of tenure.

Draft text on housing topics (ESA/STAT/AC.115/3)

General comments

9. Commentating on the importance of giving priority to national needs, experts requested that the text should be modified to refer readers to earlier chapters of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* on identifying national needs for data and relations with stakeholders. It should also refer readers to earlier chapters regarding the role of census in the national statistical system and to the census management handbook which contain, among other things, guidelines for census enumerators for collecting the information. They also wanted the wording added to Paragraph 10 “total financial and human” resources in place of “total resources.”

10. Experts expressed the need to revise the order of the presentation of topics in the housing census section of the United Nations *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*. In response, United Nations Statistics Division proposed changing the order of the topic presentation to the following:

1. livings quarters (starting in paragraph 46)
2. buildings (starting in para. 15)
3. households (starting topic 29, paragraph. 137)
4. Delete paragraphs 47 through 50, ensuring that key points are covered in the text discussing housing units.

Participants agreed with the revised order and to follow the same order in the tabulations.

11. The meeting concluded that there was a need to specify at the beginning of the topics section that the variables contained therein are for tabulation and production of outputs. This is highly relevant since several of the topics and their classifications (most notably the type of living quarters) are derived from one or more actual questions in the questionnaire. Thus, there needs to be an understanding that the topics are the results of the census obtained in the phase of processing and that they do not represent census questions. It should also be stated that general issues for data collection are treated in other parts of the *Principles and Recommendations* and other relevant United Nations handbooks.

12. The meeting advised that United Nations Statistics Division should ensure the term “roofless” is defined in the document and a cross-reference is made to the housing section where appropriate.

13. The experts discussed at length the using of the term “occupants” versus “persons”. It was agreed that occupants should be used in the tabulations where applicable and that the term needs to be clearly defined in the text.

14. The meeting acknowledged the presentation of ECE Regional European Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses as well as differences which were due to regional circumstances.

Specific comments

15. In paragraph 13 the term “occupant” should be deleted. Text should be inserted after paragraph 13 to read as follows: “The fourth unit of enumeration are individuals/members of household, their number and characteristics”.

16. Finland presented a proposal for revisions to the classification of building type. The key concern here was that the definition of building varies by country, and that coextensive is a difficult term. It was suggested to insert a sentence in paragraph 22 explaining that the definition of building varies by country for category 1 focusing on

attached buildings. Canada provided the following text: “According to the definition of building in paragraph above, a group of, for example, three row houses that are attached is considered to be three separate buildings if their "external walls or dividing walls" extend from "the foundations to the roof". As for the text on classification of buildings, the agreed changes are:

1. change “coextensive with” to “containing”
2. floors: break-down category 3-10 into two categories for 3-4 and 5-10.
3. “other” should be a main heading rather than subheading
4. delete last sentence in paragraph 23.

17. With respect to paragraph 24, the text on compounds was thought not to be clear. The meeting felt that it should be revised. The following wording was suggested by the representative from Finland “In some countries, it may be appropriate to use the “compound” as a unit of enumeration. In some areas of the world, especially in Africa, housing units are traditionally located within compounds. This means that the compound, for instance, can consist of one hut where the head of the household is living, several other huts used for sleeping by other members of the household and one or more huts for preparing food. Thus, one compound could be defined and enumerated as one housing unit. When counting the number of rooms, all of these huts should be counted together, including the kitchens. This is especially important for measuring density and overcrowding.” The meeting agreed that the United Nations Statistics Division should refine and circulate the reformulated text for comments.

18. In discussing paragraph 28, the experts agreed that year or period of construction, which was shown in table 1 as topic 3 should be changed from being a core to an additional topic. Consequently, the following changes were therefore recommended as regards Table 1. In the column “Housing Units” the symbol for topic number 1 “Type” should change from core direct (black square) to core derived (white square), and the topic number 3 “Year of construction” should change from core direct (black square) to additional (diamond). The third change comes under the column “Building” for topic number 3 “Year of construction”, instead of core derived (white square) to additional (diamond).

19. In discussing the availability of an elevator (paragraph 35) in a multi-storey building, experts agreed that this should be complemented by a write up on accessibility especially by the elderly and persons with disabilities.

20. With reference to location of living quarters (paragraphs 38-42) the experts recommended that a text be added describing the linkage of living quarters to geographic codes of collection units, such as enumeration areas, to facilitate the identification of a location with characteristics specific to the area in terms of environmental conditions, infrastructure, and etcetera. The meeting also emphasized the need to include a much detailed version of geo-coding in the part on geography and

census preparation in the revised *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*.

21. The meeting discussed at length the classification of living quarters (paragraphs 52- 79). It was agreed that the classification of the types of living quarters should be as follows:

- 1.1 Conventional dwelling
 - 1.1.1 Has all basic facilities
 - 1.1.2 Does not have all basic facilities
- 1.2 Other housing units
 - 1.2.1 Semi-permanent housing unit
 - 1.2.2 Mobile housing units
 - 1.2.3 Informal Housing Unit
 - 1.2.3.1 Permanent building, not intended for habitation
 - 1.2.3.2 Improvised housing units
 - 1.2.3.3 Other informal housing units

22. The experts advised that these changes should be consistent through out the text and the tabulation programme, while the need of maintaining historical comparisons should be taken into account.

The presentation in a tabular form is given below:

Conventional dwelling				Other housing units				
Row stub	Has all basic facilities	Does not have all basic facilities	Total	Semi-permanent housing unit	Mobile housing units	Informal Housing Unit		
						Permanent building, not intended for habitation	Improvised housing units	Other informal housing units

23. It was decided that paragraphs 64 and 69 in document 3 should be merged into one paragraph and the term “temporary housing unit” should be replaced with the term “semi-permanent housing unit”. It was also concluded that the example of *barong barong* units in the Philippines is misplaced and should be used as an example of an improvised housing unit (paragraph 74).

24. In paragraph 53 the category for staff quarters should be changed to read “staff quarters (for example nurses homes)”. It was recommended that paragraph 59 be amplified making it clear that the building refers to a structure not intended to be moved.

25. Paragraph 60 will be revised to make a distinction between the first four attributes (a room or a suite of rooms, separate access to the street or hallway, in a permanent

building intended to be occupied by one household) which all conventional dwellings must have and the remaining four attributes (availability of kitchen, bath, piped water and toilet in the units that refer to the availability of basic facilities).

26. The experts agreed that the topic heading “camps” (topic 9, paragraph 2.3) should be changed to “camps and workers’ quarters”. However, there is a need for clear definitions so as to avoid confusing staff quarters with workers’ quarters. Representatives from Uganda and Brazil provided the following categories of other types of camps: 1) military camps 2) refugee camps 3) worker camps 4) internally displaced people camps 5) other camps. The United Nations Statistics Division was asked to review and revise the final draft accordingly.

27. It was also agreed to modify the classification of “type of ownership” (topic 11, paragraph 95 (b) to include additional categories on “communally owned” and “cooperatively owned” and a category for “other”. The wording relating to ownership under mortgage will be amplified by United Nations Statistics Division if necessary. Also, there is a need for the text to emphasize that ownership as a topic refers to all housing units and not to conventional dwellings only.

28. It was decided by the experts that the wording under Topic 14: “and/or living” should be taken out of the title for “floor space”.

29. Topic 15: It was agreed that the detailed classifications for general “water supply system” would be the same as the current classification and that the topic will remain as core. “Main source of drinking water” was introduced as core topic with the classifications provided by the United Nations Statistics Division with regard to source of non-piped of water. Within the section numbers 3.8 and 3.9 will be combined as “unprotected sources” with text referring to wells, springs, rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and dams. Also, the term “private source” should be replaced by “individual source” in both classifications, that is, for general water supply system and for main source of drinking water

30. Under topic 16, Toilet- it was agreed that the classification of housing units by toilet facilities needs to be revised to include facilities without flush that are considered safe from a health perspective. The United Nations Statistics Division provided revisions which were accepted. Uganda and South Africa provided the following information on toilet and latrine categories which will be refined by the United Nations Statistics Division:

1. Toilet within housing unit
 - a. Flush
 - b. Non-flush
2. Toilet outside housing unit
 - a. Flush
 - b. Non-flush
 - Pit latrine with ventilation
 - Pit latrine without ventilation with covering

Holes or dug pits with temporary coverings or without shelter

3. Is the toilet facility
 1. For exclusive use of the household
 2. Shared by more than one household
 3. If shared, N=
4. No toilet available
 - Service or bucket facility (excreta manually removed)
 - Use of natural environment, e.g. bush, river, stream, etc

31. For fuel used for cooking (topic 20), the experts agreed to revise the text by adding kerosene/paraffin as an additional category. The United Nations Statistics Division will add text and clarifying what is meant by “oil”.

32. Topic 22: It was suggested that United Nations Statistics Division should clarify that the topic refers to the “usual manner” of solid waste disposal.

33. The experts agreed to consider “use of housing unit” (topic 26) as an additional rather than a core topic.

34. After some deliberations the experts agreed that security of tenure (topic 30) should not be included as a topic in the census, but should be recommended as topic for consideration in household surveys. It was also agreed to review the classification of households by tenure to include concepts of communal and rent-free arrangements. In addition, the meeting asked United Nations Statistics Division to expand the existing text to note that some countries collect information on rent-free arrangements with and without consent as well as on communal or cooperative ownership.

Draft recommended housing tabulations (ESA/STAT/AC.115/4)

General comments

35. The representative of the United Nations Statistics Division in introducing the recommended tabulations emphasized the following: (i) that if a characteristic is specified as “core” it should be included in at least one recommended table; (ii) tables should not be too complicated; (iii) preferably the tables should not have a mix of counting units; and (iv) in general the set of tables should not be too large.

36. In the deliberations which ensued it was suggested to add at the beginning of the section on housing tabulations a text explaining that the set of tables presented refer to core tables for national and international purposes and that countries may wish to produce additional tables with customized classifications that reflect national circumstances. The meeting was also informed that the revised *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* will present a set of optimum tabulations as an illustrative example for countries to follow in order to meet the needs of most of users.

37. Experts adopted the United Nations Statistics Division proposal that in the table RecH04, family nuclei remain a recommended unit of tabulation, given the importance of assessing housing conditions of families. It was also agreed that it should be clearly indicated that different units of enumeration should be presented in separated tables. Thus, sample tabulation will include all titles for each separate tabulation to be produced (RecH04a, RecH04b, etc). A note will also be added as a reminder that total column headings may also change according to the unit of tabulation. The following are additional general recommendation pertaining to tabulations:

(i) Any changes in the classification systems in topics will be reflected in the tabulations.

(ii) To ensure proper calculation of indices and averages, totals will be added to tabulations as appropriate.

(iii) The unit of tabulation “family nuclei” will be moved from core to optimum list except for Table H04.

(iv). An additional table was recommended for inclusion to cross - classify material of outer walls by type of living quarters covering all living quarters.

Specific comments

38. Table H01: The variable “year of construction of the building” should be moved to the optimum set of tabulations as it is no longer a core topic. Thus, H01 tabulation becomes simply “Conventional housing units by type of building and construction material of outer walls.”

39. Table H02: The title of this table will be changed to “Persons in living quarters, by types of living quarters.” In the table, the column “Total Households” is changed to “Total persons”. The column “Housing units” will be broken-down into 3 sub-categories: 1) Total, 2) Conventional, and 3) Other housing units. The column titled “Homeless” will be changed to “Roofless”.

40. Table H03: The title of this table will be modified to “Persons in collective living quarters, by type of living quarter.” The table-column “Total collective living quarters” will be changed to “Total persons.” The unit of tabulation “occupants” will be renamed to “persons.”

41. Table H05: The row-heading “Male head of household” will be amended to “Male headed household.” Similarly, the row-heading “Female head of household” will be amended to “Female headed household.” The unit of tabulation “occupants” will be changed to “persons”.

42. Table H07: The variable” number of rooms per housing unit” will be removed from this table. It will be titled “Occupied housing units, by type of housing unit, cross-classified by number of households.”

43. Table H08: The unit of tabulation “households” becomes an optimum tabulation.
44. Table H09: The unit of tabulation “households” becomes an optimum tabulation.
45. Table H10: The unit of tabulation “households” becomes an optimum tabulation. The experts agreed to add new table for cooking facilities by number of rooms as optimum.
46. Table H12: The unit of tabulation “households” becomes an optimum tabulation.
47. Table H13: The unit of tabulation “households” becomes optimum. The variable “Use of Housing Unit” should be removed from the table as it was agreed to be an additional topic.

C. Adoption of the report

48. The Expert Group Meeting adopted the report and revisions as presented here and assigned the United Nations Statistics Division to prepare an overview on the work of this Expert Group Meeting and its conclusions and to present it to the Expert Group Meeting on the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, to be held in New York, 10-14 July 2006.

APPENDIX A. Expert Group Meeting on the Principles and Recommendations for Housing Censuses

Date: 5-8 June 2006

Venue: New York

Host: United Nations Statistics Division

Contact: globalcensus2010@un.org

Web

site:

The *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing censuses* is reviewed and updated at the beginning of each census decade in order to incorporate new developments and revise the list of topics to be covered. Against this background, the United Nations Statistics Division is organizing an Expert Group Meeting to review draft recommendations pertaining to housing censuses. Based on the outcome of this expert review, the revised draft on housing censuses will then be submitted for final consideration, together with those related to population censuses, to the Expert Group Meeting on Population and Housing Censuses scheduled for 10-14 July 2006.

Purpose of the meeting

The Expert Group Meeting on *Principles and Recommendations for Housing Censuses* will: (a) discuss, in detail, proposed changes to the text of the current *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* pertaining to housing censuses, (b) identify and elaborate on issues that are not adequately covered in the current version of the *Principles and Recommendations*, and finally (c) adopt the draft text of the housing census recommendations for submission to the Expert Group Meeting to be held in July 2006.

Over the past ten months, since August 2005, there have been consultations with and comments and contributions from various experts on issues related housing censuses, through the Internet Forum of the 2010 World Programme, via e-mails and in meetings organized in different regions. All these were taken into consideration by United Nations Statistics Division in preparing the draft text being submitted to the meeting.

Key issues

The Expert Group will, apart from holding general discussions, specifically review and recommend actions on:

1. Classification of living quarters

- The draft text presents a revised classification of housing units, introducing two main classes: (a) conventional dwellings and (b) other housing units. Conventional dwellings are further categorized into (a) fully equipped and (b) partly equipped, while “other housing units” are categorized into temporary, mobile, improvised, etc. For collective living quarters, eight subcategories under the category “institutions” are introduced.

2. Core and additional topics

- There are proposals to include, in the *Principles and Recommendations*, a number of topics as core topics in housing censuses, such as fuel used for

cooking, and to change the designation of some current core topics, such as available floor space, to additional topics.

3. *Recommended tabulations*

- For the 2010 round of censuses, the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* is introducing a new international standard: recommended tabulations. The draft text proposes 16 tabulations that each country or area is expected to generate from the results censuses and other national data sources.

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Organization of work (Draft)

Monday, 5 June 2006

Registration of participants (9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.)

Morning session (10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

VII. 1. Opening

Introductory remarks by Director of UNSD (or his representative)

Purpose of the meeting, Branch Chief

Selection of Chair and Rapporteur for the meeting

- 2. UNSD presentation: Proposed changes to Housing Census section of the United Nations *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, rev. 2* - a substantial presentation on salient issues for consideration in the update of the housing section of the *Principles and Recommendations*.**

(Documents: ESA/STAT/AC.115/2, /3 and /4)

- General discussion

Lunch break (1:00 p.m.– 2:30 p.m.)

Afternoon session (2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.)

3. Discussion of housing topics – paragraphs 1 to 94.

A. Factors determining the selection of topics

B. List of topics

C. Definitions and specifications of topics

Topics to be covered: 1 to 14

(Document: ESA/STAT/AC.115/3)

Reception (5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.)

Tuesday, 6 June 2006

Morning session (9:30 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.)

4. Discussion of housing topics – paragraphs 95 to 149

C. Definitions and specifications of topics (*Continued*)

Topics to be covered: 15 to 36

(Document: ESA/STAT/AC.115/3)

Lunch break (1.00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.)

Afternoon session (2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.)

5. Discussion of recommended tabulations

Tables to be discussed: Tables H01 to H08

(Document: ESA/STAT/AC.115/4)

Wednesday, 7 June 2006

Morning session (9:30 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.)

6. Discussion of recommended tabulations (*continued*)

Tables to be discussed: H09 to H16

(Document: ESA/STAT/AC.115/4)

- General discussion

Lunch break (1.00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.)

Afternoon: No session

Thursday, 8 June 2006

Morning session (10:00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.)

7. Adoption of the draft revision.

Documents

Agenda

- Organization of work (Draft) - ESA/STAT/AC.115/1

Documents for discussion

- Overview of issues to be considered by the Expert Group Meeting in the update of the Principles and Recommendations for Housing Censuses - ESA/STAT/AC.115/2
- Draft text of Chapter VI. Topics to be investigated in housing censuses - ESA/STAT/AC.115/3
- Draft recommended housing tabulations - ESA/STAT/AC.115/4

Background document

- Comparison of international and ECE region recommendations - ESA/STAT/AC.115/5
- Tables illustrating aspects of the situation of housing in a range of countries - ESA/STAT/AC.115/6

Information flyer

- Expert Group Meeting on the Principles and Recommendations for Housing Censuses - ESA/STAT/AC.115/INFO. 1 - for information purpose