United Nations Statistics Division
ESCWA
Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS)

Meeting on a Core Set of Census Topics for ESCWA Countries

Cairo
8-12 June 2002

Report
1. Introduction

The Meeting on a Core Set of Census Topics for ESCWA Countries was held in Cairo, Egypt, from 8 to 12 June 2002. Participants attended the meeting from each of the following countries: Egypt (5), Iraq (1), Jordan (1), Oman (4), Palestine (1) Qatar (2), Saudi Arabia (2), South Africa (2) Syria (1) and Yemen (1). All country representatives to the meeting were data producers. The detailed list of participants including the resource persons is given as Annex 1 of the report.

2. Opening Session and objectives of the meeting

Since this meeting was considered one of the two-week meetings on Disability Measurement and a Core Set of Census Topics for ESCWA countries, no formal opening was done. Mr. Jeremiah Banda, Chief, Social and Housing Statistics Section at the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), who briefed the participants on the objectives of the meeting, opened the meeting. The objectives of the meeting can be summarized as follows:

- To agree on a basic core set of census topics to be used by the countries in the ESCWA region;
- To harmonize concepts and definitions of the census topics and to develop a regional manual for field work;
- To establish networks among the ESCWA countries so that common problems related to census taking could be solved within the region and in a better cost-effective way; and
- To encourage the exchange of experiences in census taking among the countries of the ESWCA region.

3. Topics of the meeting

The meeting covered the following topics:

- Objectives of the meeting
- Review of recent census questionnaires and reaching a consensus on a core set of census topics
- Basis of enumeration: reference to special population groups
- Migration (internal and international)
- Basic demographic topics
- Education and literacy
- Economic characteristics
- Fertility and mortality
- Housing characteristics

4. Structure of the meeting

Annex 2 of this report presents the work program of the meeting which was structured into formal presentations by resource persons, and group sessions where participants discussed
an assigned topic to a set format. The working groups reported back during the plenary sessions and comments of the participants were incorporated and a joint report of the group sessions was produced. The last section on conclusions of the meeting includes the highlights of the working group deliberations.

Copies of presentations by resource persons are presented in Annexes 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 of this report.

The participants were asked to evaluate the workshop and the results of the evaluation are presented in Annex 3. About 75% of the participants rated the presentations by resource persons as either excellent or very good and about 94% thought that the working group sessions were either very useful or useful. The majority of participants rated the workshop as either very useful or useful in term of its long-term usefulness to their professional work and also in terms of exchange of ideas, views and experiences between the participants.

5. Conclusions of the meeting

The Meeting on a Core Set of Census Topics for ESCWA Countries arrived at the following conclusions:

(a) General conclusions

(1) The need for comparable data based on common census topics, concepts and definitions was recognized.

(2) There was agreement on a list of common core census topics for the region.

(3) Participants expressed a need for networking and exchanging of experiences in census data collection among countries in the region.

(4) There was general agreement on need to use existing United Nations methodological guidelines for collecting and classifying data from censuses.

(5) The meeting recognized the use of sample surveys to collect more specialized and detailed information.

(6) There should be harmonization of concepts and definitions between different data sources – censuses, surveys and vital registration.

(b) Highlights of working-group deliberations
(1) **Basis of enumeration** – about half the participating countries used a de facto approach and another half used a combination of both *de facto* and *de jure*. Only one country used *de jure* approach. All the countries, except two, will use the same approach as in the previous census.

(2) **Migration** – all countries represented collected data on internal migration based on the United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Rev.1.
   - Question on place of birth should be replaced by one on place of usual residence of mother of the person at the time of birth of person.
   - Additional topic recommended: Reasons for migration

(3) **Basic demographic and social topics** – there are differences between the countries represented regarding the lowest age for reporting marital status. However, some participants felt that there may be a need for a uniform lower age for reporting age on marital status in the region.

(4) All the countries represented use the term **Nationality** instead of citizenship.

(5) **Educational characteristics**
   - All the participating countries collected data on literacy and education based on the United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Rev.1. There are variations between the countries represented regarding lower age limit for reporting on school attendance, educational attainment, and educational qualifications.

(6) **Economic characteristics**
   - Participants preferred not to ask about both current and usual activity in the census because of additional burden on interviewers. Countries may use both if they so wish.
   - Inclusion of basic questions on employment in the informal sector was considered of high priority.
   - Questions on complex topics such as income, hours worked, working environment, etc. are not suitable for inclusion in census and should be investigated through sample surveys.

(7) **Fertility and mortality**
   - The participating countries agreed to collect information on fertility through questions on children ever born and surviving.
   - Information will also be collected on age of mother at first marriage or on duration of marriage.
   - The participating countries generally obtain information on mortality from other sources. Data on orphanhood is best investigated through detailed surveys.

(8) **Housing**
   - Information on housing is important for making comparisons on quality of life among countries.
Countries may collect information on additional topics of importance to the country such as topics related to the environment.

(c) **Common core topics**

Details of the common core topics that follow will be presented in operational guidelines being prepared by a consultant.

(1) **Demographic and Social Topics**
- Age
- Date of birth
- Sex
- Relationship to reference person
- Marital status
- Nationality

(2) **Internal and International Migration**
- Place of usual residence
- Place of usual residence of mother at time of birth of the person
- Duration of residence
- Place of previous residence

(3) **Educational Characteristics**
- Literacy
- School attendance
- Educational attainment
- Field of education
- Educational qualifications

(4) **Economic Characteristics**
- Activity status
- Employment status
- Occupation
- Industry/economic activity
- Institutional sector of employment

(5) **Fertility**
- Children ever born
- Children living
- Date of birth of last child born alive or births in last 12 months
- Age at first marriage, date or duration of marriage

(6) **Disability**
- Types
- Causes
(7) Housing
  Building
    - Type
    - Construction material
    - Year of construction
  Living Quarters
    - Type
    - Occupancy status
    - Ownership
    - Number of rooms
Water supply system
Toilet and sewerage
Bathing facilities
Cooking facilities
Type of lighting
Solid waste disposal
Tenure
Availability in household of durable goods

(8) Other Topics

Additional topics may be included depending on national data needs.
### Annex1: List of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/International Organization</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Tel/Fax</th>
<th>e-mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Bouthayna El Deeb, Under Secretary</td>
<td>Demographic Department, Central Agency for Public Mobilization &amp; Statistics (CAPMAS) Salah Salem Street – Cairo</td>
<td>Tel : (202) 4143544 Fax: (202) 5941073</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Fatma Mohamed El-Ashry</td>
<td>Central Agency for Public Mobilization &amp; Statistics (CAPMAS) Salah Salem Street – Cairo</td>
<td>Tel : (202) 4143544 Fax: (202) 5941073</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Mohamed A. El Desoky</td>
<td>Central Agency for Public Mobilization &amp; Statistics (CAPMAS) Salah Salem Street – Cairo</td>
<td>Tel : (202) 4143544 Fax: (202) 5941073</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Louay Rashid, Director of Census</td>
<td>Central Statistical Organization</td>
<td>Fax: ( 009641 ) 5372605 Tel: ( 009641 ) 5372605 C/O UNDP Baghdad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>Mr. Issa Al-Shikh, Director Census</td>
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<td>Fax: (9965) 243-0464 Tel:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>Ali Mahaboob Hassan, Director General of the census</td>
<td>Ministry of National Economy, Department of Social Statistics</td>
<td>Fax: (968) 698-909 Tel: (968) 698825</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Country/International Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>Habib Jaffar Al Lawatia, Training Section Head</td>
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<td>Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics</td>
<td>Fax: (972-2) 240-6343 Tel: ( 972-2 ) 2406340</td>
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<td>Mr. Jamal Abdulla Al-Midfa</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Ms. Gugulethu Gule Deputy Director General Population Statistics</td>
<td>Statistics South Africa Pretoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Mr. Nelson Nyagah Consultant Population Statistics</td>
<td>Statistics South Africa Pretoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Sirageldin Suliman, Consultant</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Ssuliman24@aou.com">Ssuliman24@aou.com</a> Fax: +1 (212)963 1940 Tel: +1-(203) 324-1821</td>
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<td>ESCWA</td>
<td>Mr. Ahmed Hussein, Team Leader Social Statistics and Indicators United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western</td>
<td>Statistics Division</td>
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<td>Country/International Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia (ESCWA)</td>
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<td>P.O.Box 11- 8575 Beirut Lebanon UN ESCWA Riad Solh Square Tel. 009611 978408 Fax. 009611 981 510 E-mail. <a href="mailto:hussein@un.org">hussein@un.org</a></td>
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</table>
Annex 2: Agenda

UNITED NATIONS  
Statistics Division  

ESCWA  

28 April 2005  

Meeting on a Core Set of Census Topics  
Cairo, 8-12 June 2002  

Work Programme  

Saturday, 8 June 2002  

8:00 - 8:15 a.m.  
Objectives of the meeting  
Jerry Banda, UNSD  

8:15 - 10:00 a.m.  
Reaching a consensus on a core set of census topics  
Discussion leaders: Sirageldin Suliman  
Angela Me, UNSD  

10:00 – 10:30 a.m.  
Coffee Break  

10:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.  
Working Groups: an analysis of census topics  
Coordinators: Sirageldin Suliman and Angela Me, UNSD  

12:15 – 12:45 a.m.  
Coffee Break  

12:45 - 2:30 p.m.  
Presentation by working groups  

Sunday, 9 June 2002  

Moderator:  
Jordan  

8:00 – 9:15 a.m.  
Basis of enumeration: reference to special population groups  
Discussion leader: Sirageldin Suliman  

9:15 – 10:30 a.m.  
Migration  
Discussion leader: Sirageldin Suliman
10:30 - 11:00 a.m. Coffee Break

11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. Working Groups to identify differences and similarities:
    Basis of enumeration
    Migration
    Coordinator: Siregeldin Suliman

12:15 - 12:45 p.m. Coffee Break

12:45 – 2:30 p.m. Presentation by working groups

Monday, 10 June 2002

Moderator: Saudi Arabia

8:00 – 9:15 a.m. Basic demographic topics
    Discussion leader: Margaret Mbogoni, UNSD

9:15 – 10:30 a.m. Education and Literacy
    Discussion leader: Ahmed Hussein, ESCWA

10:30 - 11:00 a.m. Coffee Break

11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. Working Groups to identify differences and similarities:
    Basic demographic topics
    Education and Literacy
    Coordinators: Margaret Mbogoni, UNSD
    Ahmed Hussein, ESCWA

12:15 - 12:45 p.m. Coffee Break

12:45 – 2:30 p.m. Presentation by working groups

Tuesday, 11 June 2002

Moderator: Palestine

8:00 – 10:30 a.m. Economic Characteristics
    Discussion leader: Jerry Banda, UNSD

10:30 - 11:00 a.m. Coffee Break
11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.  Working Groups to identify differences and similarities: Economic Characteristics
   Coordinator: Jerry Banda, UNSD

12:15 - 12:45 p.m.  Coffee Break

12:45 – 2:30 p.m.  Presentation by working groups

Wednesday, 12 June 2002

Moderator: Yemen

8:00 – 9:15 a.m.  Fertility and Mortality
   Discussion leader: Ahmed Hussein, ESCWA

9:15 – 10:30 a.m.  Housing
   Discussion leader: Jerry Banda, UNSD

10:30 - 11:00 a.m.  Coffee Break

11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.  Working Groups to identify differences and similarities:
   Fertility and Mortality
   Housing
   Coordinators: Jerry Banda, UNSD
   Ahmed Hussein, ESCWA

12:15 - 12:45 p.m.  Coffee Break

12:45 – 1:30 p.m.  Presentation by working groups

1:30 – 2:30 p.m.  Recommendations
   UNSD
   ESCWA

Closing
Annex 3: Evaluation Survey

Annex 3

EVALUATION FORM

IN GENERAL, HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE …

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<th>Too long</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Too short</th>
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<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Poor</th>
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<th>Very good</th>
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<th>Poor</th>
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<td>33%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Poor</th>
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<td>56%</td>
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<td>2. Clarity</td>
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<td>31%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>46%</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<td>31%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<th>Useful</th>
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PLEASE RATE THE WORKSHOP IN TERMS OF …

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<th>Clarification of problems related to the content of the census</th>
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<th>Useful</th>
<th>Some extent</th>
<th>Inadequate</th>
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<td>47%</td>
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<th>Introduction of new approaches</th>
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<th>Some extent</th>
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<th>Some extent</th>
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<th>Useful</th>
<th>Some extent</th>
<th>Inadequate</th>
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<td>65%</td>
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IS THERE ANY OTHER TOPIC THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN INCLUDED, WHERE?

DO YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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________________________________________________________________________
**HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE FOLLOWING SESSIONS?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Presentation was:</th>
<th>Topic of this session was:</th>
<th>Will you use the information for future work?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reaching a consensus on a core set of census topics</td>
<td>Very clear 65%</td>
<td>Very useful 71%</td>
<td>Yes 82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clear 35%</td>
<td>Useful 29%</td>
<td>Perhaps 18%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not clear</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basis of enumeration: reference to special population groups</td>
<td>Very clear 65%</td>
<td>Very useful 59%</td>
<td>Yes 76%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clear 35%</td>
<td>Useful 41%</td>
<td>Perhaps 24%</td>
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<td>Yes 76%</td>
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<td>Clear 47%</td>
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<td>Yes 76%</td>
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