



2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme Newsletter

United Nations Expert Group Meeting to Review the Draft Handbook on Geographic Databases and Census Mapping, New York, 7-10 April 2008

The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) organized an expert group meeting to review the draft Handbook on Geographic Databases and Census Mapping. The objective of the Handbook is to provide detailed technical and operational guidance on geographic information and census mapping, while drawing on the experiences of countries in using geospatial technologies with census mapping operations.

At the meeting, experts emphasized the need to have a good and comprehensive plan on how to implement and maintain an effective geospatial infrastructure. To ensure that the geospatial tools serve all aspects and stages of the census process, the plan should start from the outputs and services of the census and then work backwards through the stages of this process.



More information, including the recommendations of the meeting, is available at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/egm/CensusMapping_Handbook_EGM08/default.htm.

Census taking in the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses

Since the round started in 2005, about 60 countries and/or areas of the world have either conducted a traditional census or produced census-like data from alternative sources of data. For information on the status of census taking during the 2010 round, see <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/censusdates.htm> and also <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/census2010.htm>.

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United Nations Workshop on the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses: International Standards, Contemporary Technologies and Regional Cooperation, 4 - 8 February 2008, Noumea, New Caledonia

The purpose of the Workshop was to present international standards for conducting population and housing censuses and to provide an opportunity for exploring ways of strengthening regional cooperation in establishing joint ventures during various stages of population and housing censuses in the region. The workshop also covered the use of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) for census and survey data capture, Geographical Information System (GIS) and other geospatial technologies in census mapping activities. The workshop was attended by participants for ten countries and one territory, and by four international/regional organizations.

The workshop recommended the need to follow international guidelines including the United Nations *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2* and also in the areas of quality assurance, census management and planning.

Participants expressed the need for the countries in the region to share expertise, methodologies, human resources and technologies throughout the region, including the harmonization of concepts, definitions and classifications.

The development of new technologies for census geography and data capture was recognized as providing a powerful tool for increasing the efficiency of the census-taking in the region. However, the relatively high costs of acquiring satellite imagery for census geography were noted. The workshop also recommended cooperation at the national level when it comes to acquiring, using and developing GIS applications as most of the national statistical offices in the region have few staff and that adversely affect their capacity to develop GIS applications.

It was also noted that contemporary technologies for data capture, such as

OMR, OCR and ICR represent powerful tools for vastly improving data capture for the population and housing censuses.

The workshop also recognized the census as the ideal starting point in developing improved disaster management schemes.



For more information about the workshop, see <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/cwp2010/docs.htm>.



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United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Regional Workshop on promoting disability data collection through the 2010 Population and Housing Censuses, Bangkok, 8–10 April 2008

The ESCAP Statistics Division, together with other partners, organized a regional workshop to promote disability data collection through the 2010 Population and Housing Censuses. This timely workshop advocated for the ICF-based approach to disability data collection and provided practical training on the implementation of the global census recommendations on disability. The workshop also served as an opportunity for identifying specific country needs for support in both census- and survey-based disability data collection. It is one of the key activities under a United Nations Development Account project on improving disability statistics in Asia and the Pacific.



At the workshop, participants addressed the mismatch between data users and producers recognizing that various ministries and government agencies collect data on disability deriving in different prevalence rates. Country delegates acknowledged that absence of a common approach to data collection impedes international comparability. Participants also recognized that censuses provide a unique occasion to collect data on disability, despite the fact that only a few questions can be included given space and financial limitations.

For more information, go to: <http://www.unescap.org/stat/disability/census-ws/index.asp>.

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) supports member countries in preparing for the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses

Most countries in the UNECE region are preparing for the 2010 round of Population and Housing Censuses. Clear guidance is given to UNECE countries by the "Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing", prepared by UNECE in cooperation with Eurostat. In the process of planning the census, countries may benefit greatly from exchanging their experiences on the problems they are facing. A Joint UNECE-Eurostat Meeting on Population and Housing Censuses organized in Geneva on 13–15 May 2008 provided such an opportunity. Topics discussed included census quality assurance and evaluation, difficult-to measure census topics, and census data editing and validation. The meeting was followed by a one-day Workshop on Communication and Dissemination of Census Results, attended by census experts as well as experts on statistical dissemination and communication. The workshop included discussion topics on disseminating census data to specific groups, dynamic systems on the Web, and communicating quality.

For more information:

<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2008.05.census.htm>

<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2008.05.dissemination2.htm>

http://www.unece.org/stats/publications/CES_2010_Census_Recommendations_English.pdf



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CARICOM Workshop on the Design of a Common Questionnaire for the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Census in the region, Roseau, Dominica, 13-16 May 2008

The workshop was attended by 24 participants representing 17 CARICOM Member States and Associate Members, as well as 2 organizations. The objectives of the workshop were to: (i) forge consensus with respect to the design of a draft common questionnaire to be used as an instrument in the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses; (ii) make recommendations on the relevant thematic areas for which information should be collected (i.e. housing, migration, crime and violence, education, etc); (iii) identify best practices from the past census questionnaires that can be incorporated in the common design format; and (iv) address issues with regard to data capture, data validation and tabulation processes relative to the common format.

The workshop was part of a programme of support whose over-riding objective is to develop a common framework for the execution of population census in the CARICOM Member States in the round of 2010. The main objective of the CARICOM Common Census Framework Project, therefore, is the production of comparable high quality census data among the countries in the region through common census topic and questions; common methodologies; and comparable data dissemination tools.



Some of the recommendations that came up during the discussions included:

- (i) Establish common concepts and definitions of census topics for the region.
- (ii) Core topics as recommended in the P&R will form the basis and serve as a guide for the final census topics in the region for the 2010 round of censuses. However the region will include other topics deemed important to the region.
- (iii) Questions proposed for the core topics should be common across the region. However countries which collect some of the core topics from other source(s) may choose not to include those topics in their censuses.

For more information on the CARICOM Common Census Framework Project, contact:

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2008 United Nations Census Workshops on Census Data Processing: Contemporary Technologies for Data Capture, Methodology and Practice of Data Editing

The United Nations Statistics Division is conducting, in 2008, regional workshops on data processing, with emphasis on contemporary technologies for data capture and data editing. The primary objective of the workshops is to present international standards for processing data from population and housing censuses and to highlight the significant additional capabilities of contemporary technologies and their use for census data capture and data editing. More specific objectives include to: (i) present and discuss contemporary technologies in census data capture, including the use of optical mark recognition (OMR), optical character recognition/intelligent character recognition (OCR/ICR); (ii) discuss the process stages for data capture; (iii) present an overview of major commercial suppliers for data capture; (iv) present the principles and practices for census data coding and data editing; and (v) discuss ways of improving the management and planning of the census, including outsourcing issue. The workshops also offer the possibility for the sharing of experiences among participants regarding census data processing in their countries.

So far, two of the five planned workshops have been conducted, for the countries in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), [Doha, Qatar, 18-22 May 2008] and for the African English speaking countries (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 9-13 June 2008). Although in general, countries were encouraged to take advantage of available data capture technology, they were strongly advised to take into account the particular circumstances of the country in question (financial resources, expertise, outsourcing modalities, etc) when making such decisions. The importance of adequate planning for the census, including for data capture was emphasized at the workshops. In particular, it was stressed that decisions regarding outsourcing of data processing should be taken early enough to allow time for the bidding process, for testing and implementing the technical specifications. Furthermore, the implementation of quality assurance systems during data processing was highlighted as being essential for the delivery of good quality census outputs.



For more information on the workshops, go to:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/wshops/Qatar_18May08/default.htm

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/wshops/Tanzania_9June08/default.htm

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