DRAFT
Producing Gender Statistics through Population Censuses in the ESCWA region*

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Introduction

In the wake of the Beijing Platform for Action signed at the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in 1995, there was increased awareness and demand for gender statistics and gender-sensitive data in the Arab countries. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) played a pivotal role in developing Gender Statistics in the region. This was culminated in the production of Women and Men national series derived mainly (basically) from population censuses.

Population census is a major source of gender statistics. It provides the major source for collecting and compiling sex-disaggregated data on various demographic, social and economic characteristic. It provides a comprehensive picture on societal characteristics of the population by sex. When data are analyzed with gender perspective, they usually provide useful information for assessing gender differences in living and working conditions.

However, unless specific care is taken at the preparatory stage when undertaking a census it is likely that the census may produce gender-based biases. The specific care taken relate to activities that enter into the census content and those that inter census operations\(^1\).

This paper is an overview of ESCWA activities and achievement in raising awareness and in galvanizing attention to the importance of gender-based data; capacity building towards production and analysis of women and men series at the national level; focusing publications and handbooks on regional compilations of women statistics and indicators at the regional level, and generating more responsive gender monitoring and reporting. The latter was done through proposing a regional list of indicators linking the MDGs and Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) in a single gender framework.

The paper presents also a quick history of population censuses in the ESCWA Region. It provides an overview of gender mainstreaming efforts in the national statistical systems and the provisions for them in theory and practice. It focuses also on the content of census operation as well as on operations in compiling sex-disaggregated data for evidence-based planning. Finally the paper ends by making some recommendations.

\(^1\) United Nations, Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2, 2006.
Engendering Statistics in the ESCWA Region

Beijing Platform for Action
Strategic objective H.3.

“Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation”
Fourth World Conference on Women
(Beijing, September 1995)

Immediately following the Beijing Conference in 1995, ESCWA launched the Development of National Gender Statistics Programmes in the Arab Countries\(^2\) (GSP) in 1997, in coordination with the UNDP, UNICEF, CAWTAR, AGFUND and IDRC\(^3\).

The Statistics Division at ESCWA, with input from experts, international organizations and gender focal points in the national statistical offices in the Region. These institutions aim to enhance national capabilities in producing, using and disseminating gender statistics. They do this through: (i) publishing Manuals, guidelines and handbooks to evaluate and improve definitions, concepts, and methods; (ii) implementing projects, workshops and study visits to improve skills in producing, analysing and disseminating; (iii) publishing gender-based statistical reports and disseminating evidence-based statistics; and (iv) developing and maintaining gender database and framework for the monitoring and analysing, nationally compiled data. Finally publications, training materials, and databases are all made available on the Statistics Division Homepage and Virtual Library\(^4\).

In addition, to GSP the Statistics Division is implementing a number of other projects on gender. They include:

- Development of National Gender Statistics in Iraq (UNDG-IFT)
- Interregional Cooperation to Strengthen Social Inclusion, Gender Equality and Health Promotion in the Millennium Development Goals
- Toward More Gender-Responsive MDG Monitoring and Reporting in the Arab Region

The Division has also carried out a number of regional and national workshops. It facilitated also the following study tours:

- Workshop on Gender Statistics as a Tool for Policy Formulation and Analysis (Beirut, 17-19 June 2003)
- Workshop on Time-Use Survey (Amman 4-6 November 2007)
- Fellowships of Iraq COSIT/Gender Unit to Jordan DOS/Gender

\(^2\) GSP activities commenced on both the regional and national levels in twelve Arab countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Tunisia, Syria and Yemen.

\(^3\) http://www.escwa.un.org/gsp/index.html

\(^4\) http://www.escwa.un.org/divisions/scu/themes/projects.asp?ID=2&Theme=Gender%20Statistics&SectionID=7&Section=Projects
Currently as an attempt to evaluate and improve definitions, concepts, and methods the Division is publishing Gender in MDGs: An Information Guide for Arab MDG Reports in 2007. Earlier, the Division translated the Handbook on “How to Prepare Statistical Publications on Women and Men” into Arabic.

Moreover, the Division completed several Gender-based statistical publications on:
- Women and Men in the Arab Region: A Statistical Portrait
- Women and Men: Education
- Women and Men: Employment
- Where Do Arab Women Stand in the Development Process?
- Arab Women in Public Life and Leadership

In an effort to develop a national gender database for the member States in the Region the Division compiled published information from relevant sources (such as women and men series, MDG national reports, etc). It is also useful to note in this context that the database, Arab GenInfo will be made available on ESCWA Statistics Division Homepage and Virtual Library.

In 2007, ESCWA succeeded in developing a regional list for gender indicators. In the Inter-agency and Expert Group (IAEG) Meeting on Gender and the MDGs in the Arab Region held in September 2007, ESCWA in collaboration with the representatives of the UN agencies, national statistical offices and women’s nongovernmental organizations agreed to a proposed regional list of goal-specific gender priorities and corresponding gender-sensitive indicators for the region. The proposed “G IS IN” Framework provides a measurement tool linking the MDGs and Beijing Platform for Action in one framework.

At the national level and in cooperation with the national statistical offices in the region a series of national workshops (17) were held in connection to GSP to prepare national women and men publications. 11 countries have published national women and men statistical portrait series\(^5\). Some of these countries have been producing these series on a biannual basis since then.

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\(^5\) Women and Men series have been produced by Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen, and Morocco.
Censuses History in the ESCWA Region

Population and housing censuses are implemented in all the countries of the ESCWA region with the exception of Lebanon\(^6\). The national statistical office in each country is responsible for conducting the decennial censuses, except in Oman and UAE where census undertaking is assigned to the Ministry of Economy in both countries.

In the first 1990 round (1985-1994) eleven countries carried out their population censuses, namely; Egypt, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Yemen (former Republic and Democratic).

The following 2000 round of censuses (1995-2004), 12 countries carried out a population census. The 2000 round included all the countries\(^7\) of the first round in addition to Palestine.

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<tr>
<td>11 (Yemen 3 counted as 1)</td>
<td>12 (Qatar 2 counted as 1)</td>
<td>4 completed and 9 are planned</td>
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</table>

In the present 2010 round (2005-2014), four countries have completed their census (Egypt, Kuwait, Palestine\(^8\), and UAE). Iraq has postponed its 2007 census to a later date due to the deteriorating security situation. Nine countries are planning to carry them out by 2014. A complete list of the countries and dates of censuses are presented in Annex I.

Member countries collect their census data through the traditional questionnaire method except in Yemen. In 2004, Yemen used the short and long method in its last population census. In all the countries the questionnaires are delivered home, self-filled by the head of household, and later collected by the enumerator. All countries in the ESCWA region conduct a de facto census, except Bahrain.

ESCWA member countries strive to follow international guidelines in carrying out their censuses. They have also been actively involved in the United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses revisions through ESCWA 2010 Population and Housing Census Task Force established in 2005.

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\(^6\) Lebanon has no act to carry out a census. The first and last census was conducted in 1932.

\(^7\) Qatar conducted two censuses; 1997 and 2004.

\(^8\) Palestine census is ongoing till end of December 2007.
Gender Mainstreaming in the Statistical Systems

In an effort to mainstream gender in the statistical systems, member countries9 participating in the GSP published their gender based national reports. The reports include: national work plans, overviews of national workshops, national strategies for improving gender statistics, and challenges.

In addition, some of the member countries have explicitly included gender related topics and the need to collect sex-disaggregated data in their latest National Statistical Development Strategies (NSDS)10.

The Jordan NSDS11, for example, includes under the item on rationale of its strategy a “broad request for data to be disaggregated by groups (equality requirements), such as sex, age, marital status, etc.” The objective of the plan of action for the water and agricultural sector is to “Provide detailed data on the participation of women in the agricultural work in terms of properties and areas of work and the number of workers (through agricultural census 2007)”. In addition, the objective of the plan of action for the population and social sector specifies making data on the women’s socio-economic characteristics, available on periodic basis. It also specifies the provision of data on special population groups such as women, disabled, elderly, and children; and the implementation of specialized surveys in fertility. The objective of the plan of action for the health sector is to provide data on deaths by age group and sex, urban and rural; on births by age of mother; on maternal morbidity and mortality; on abortion by causes, type and characteristics of the mother and the previous baby; and to provide statistical data on the numbers of patients and diagnostic purposes in accordance to sex, age and medical specialties”. Under the objective of the Education Sector provisions for data compilation on the number of workers in the education sector by sex, specialization, profession and administrative divisions are made.

Similarly, Oman NSDS12 include under the item on future development the increasing demand for statistical products and the need for monitoring progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and international conferences recommendations. It follows by emphasizing on collection of statistics on the standard of living, environment, natural resources, labor force, and women contribution in public and political life. The strategy also stresses on a wider dissemination of detailed data by gender to bridge the shortage of statistical products and strengthen customer satisfaction.

However, there is no mention of such explicit reference to the compilation of sex-disaggregated data or gender related topics in the NSDS of Egypt, Kuwait, nor Yemen. Qatar and Syria have not yet made their NSD available.

Gender Units have been established in the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of Palestine and Jordan. The two NSOs, hence then, have been actively involved in conducting specialized surveys and publishing gender-based reports. In addition, and under the umbrella of ESCWA UNDG funded project on the

9 Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen.
10 To date, seven member countries namely: Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Syria, and Yemen have completed their NSDS. Two countries; Palestine and UAE, NSDS are in the pipeline.
Development of National Gender Statistics in Iraq a Gender Unit was also established in Iraq NSO. Nevertheless, some member countries which do not have Gender Units, have been actively producing and undertaking activities on gender statistics, such as Yemen, Syria, Egypt to name a few.

**Gender Mainstreaming in the Population Censuses**

The definition of Gender Statistics is the conceptualization of women and men’s roles and responsibilities as a function of culture, religion, tradition, social norms and economic necessity; where changes occur over time and differ from place to place; not biologically determined nor constant; and explains differences between women and men’s status, conditions, access to and control over resources, and development needs.

**Gender Census Content**

Most of ESCWA member countries collect, compile and present disaggregated data by sex for all individuals through their population censuses; where most of the variables and characteristics are analyzed by and presented with sex as a primary and overall classification. Most of the countries also publish Women and Men reports based on the population census data.

However, very few of the member countries are exerting specific efforts to identify gender issues and to ensure that data addressing these are collected and made available. In addition, almost all of the countries have not formulated concepts and definitions used in data collection that would adequately reflect the diversity of women and men and capture all aspects of their lives. Finally, almost all the countries did not develop data collection methods that take into account stereotypes and social and cultural factors that might produce gender biases.

Gender issues with national specificity need to be reflected upon when designing a population questionnaire. To improve the coverage of women and provide good gender statistics, detailed information is needed at the sectoral level. To improve the gender content in census questionnaires issues which reflect gender disparity need to be brought out such as distinguishing between female-headed and male-headed households. In education, information on retention, dropout and completion rates by sex including information on non-formal education and adult education are also important. Women’s economic activity is a major issue in all countries, hence the use of a longer reference period of 12 months, and the inclusion of own account and unpaid family workers in the workforce would contribute to flag women’s participation in the economy.

Regional specificity of gender issues were flagged out in IAEG meeting on Gender and MDGs held this year, and has been reflected in the outcome booklet on Gender in MDG in the ESCWA region with the related indicators to measure.

In addition, census data could also be enhanced through the fielding of large-scale sample surveys to further investigate specific issues which are usually implemented in the last round of population censuses. The advantage would be enhancing the response rate and quality of data with less cost of conducting a separate survey. In addition, it provides timely, accurate and cost effective information by linking it to the census data without jeopardizing the census operation.
Two countries, Jordan and the Syria carried out independent surveys in parallel with the census and based upon its framework and provided additional demographic, social and economic information on the population characteristics\textsuperscript{13}.

**Where do ESCWA member countries stand from the UN Recommended List of Topics?**

In the context of assessing the basic components of the population census questionnaires in the ESCWA region, a review of 10 questionnaires were undertaken against the UN recommended list of topics.

Almost all ESCWA member countries have included the main topics as recommended in the UN Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Census, Revision 2, with some variation.

The results of the review are as follows:

The topic on “Demographic and social characteristics” had 86% coverage in the 10 questionnaires of member countries. Sex was covered by all 10 countries; Age by 6 countries (7 countries asked about the Date of birth dd/mm/yy and one country doesn’t have both questions); the Current marital status was covered by all 10 countries, whereas the Citizenship was asked by 8 countries. Type of disability was also included in 9 questionnaires with 7 requesting the Reason for disability and 3 the duration of disability.

The “Fertility and mortality” topic had the lowest coverage (53%) in the 10 reviewed questionnaires. The Age at 1st marriage was asked by 5 countries, the Duration of marriage, for females was asked by only 2 countries (in addition 4 countries requested information on the Number of marriages. Both the Number of live births, male and female (Number of children ever born) and the Number of live then dead, male female (Number of children surviving) were asked each by 7 countries.

70% of questions covered the “Migration characteristics”. This included Place of last previous residence (7 countries) and Place of Birth (6 countries), while the Duration of residence at place of enumeration was covered by 8 countries.

80% of the questions covered the “Education characteristics”. This included 8 countries requesting information on the School enrolment/attendance; 9 countries requested information on the Educational level (kindergarten, primary) (currently enrolled), in addition the Highest educational certificate obtained (previously enrolled) was also covered by 9 countries and 1 country covered the Vocational training. All 10 countries sought data on Literacy (illiterate, literate,...) and 5 countries on Field of study.

The “Economic characteristics” had a 75% coverage by all member countries. This included requesting data by all 10 countries on the Employment status and 8 on Occupation. Information on the

\textsuperscript{13} Hussein A. Sayed, Population and Housing Censuses in the ESCWA Region: Current Status and Future Directives, Symposium on Global Review of 2000 Round of Population and Housing Censuses: Mid-Decade Assessment and Future Prospects, Symposium 2001/56
Establishment sector type (private, public, family, communal, other..) were asked by 9 countries, whereas all asked about the Main field/activity of establishment. However, 2 countries only requested information on the Number of hours worked (during previous week) and 6 on the Type of Economic activity (during previous week).

85% of the “Household characteristics” questions were included in the member countries questionnaires, with 9 countries requesting information on the Relation to head of the household and 8 on the Number of persons in household.

**How many of the UN Recommended core tabulations are produced by member countries?**

A second review was conducted on the results of population census of 2010 Round for five ESCWA member countries against the UN recommended minimum/core list of tabulations for population censuses. A maximum of 63% of the core tabulations were produced by the member countries.

The most produced tabulations are on educational characteristics, followed by both; on economic characteristics and on demographic and social characteristics. The tabulations on household characteristics, then fertility and mortality, and geographical and internal migration characteristics come next. The last two and least produced tabulations are on disability characteristics and on international migration and immigrant stocks.

**Gender Census operations**

The area of “gendered statistics” moves the concept of gender statistics from the limited sex disaggregation of data into the mainstream of national statistical system as a whole. However, the data collection framework and instruments themselves are gender biased. It requires a thorough review and a systematic engendering of each specific data collection instrument.

Gender sensitization of Population and Housing Censuses require a number of activities. These activities could be carried out in the three phases of the census operation. The first phase is the pre-enumeration phase may involve inclusion of a number of gender-specific questions in the census schedules, modification and standardization of concepts and definitions for technical terms, preparation of standard classification of occupation and industry, and training enumerators to be gender sensitive.

The second phase is during the enumeration operation, which could include the gender sensitization of respondents through publicity campaigns, and the supervision of enumerators to ensure a gender-sensitive enumeration process.

The last phase is the post-enumeration phase by developing special tabulation and publications in conjunction with the regular census data dissemination and publication activities.

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14 Lorrainne Corner, From Margins to Mainstream: From Gender Statistics to Engendering Statistical Systems, UNIFEM in Asia-Pacific and Arab States.
A questionnaire was developed by ESCWA and sent to member countries to gauge the extent of activities that were undertaken to mainstream a gender perspective into census (Annex II). Eight out of thirteen member countries responded to the questionnaire.

All eight NSOs responded that their national statistical strategies/work plans include mainstreaming gender in all statistical work. The NSOs also confirmed having a predefined plan to mainstream a gender perspective during the planning (7/8), design (8/8), operation (7/8) and tabulation (7/8) stages.

In the Pre-Enumeration phase 5/8 NSOs have gender cells/units to sensitize the census functionaries and handling of gender issues, 3/8 stated it will be considered for the next census, and 1/8 of NSO stated they are not planning.

4/8 NSO have conducted gender orientation workshops for senior management with the objective of providing exposure to gender concepts, insights into gender concerns in statistics and highlight importance of integrating gender concerns into the census. Egypt stated that it organized two of these workshops. 3/8 stated it will be considered for the next census, and 1/8 NSO stated they are not planning.

3/8 NSOs developed a media/publicity materials portraying gender concepts and explaining gender terminologies and TV/radio campaigns at the national and sub-national levels. 4/8 country stated that it will implement this activity in its next census, and 1/8 of NSO stated they are not planning.

4/8 NSOs confirmed establishing gender-oriented technical committees or expert groups to deal specifically with gender concerns at the various stages of the census: questionnaire, manual preparation, media, project management, occupation and industrial classifications. 4/8 country stated that it will implement this activity in its next census.

2/8 NSO stated Workshop on mainstreaming gender in census for census experts and gender experts to develop consensus on integration of gender concerns in the census. One NSO stated that the National Council for Women which undertook the organization of this workshop. 5/8 stated that it will implement this activity in its next census, and 1/8 NSO stated they are not planning.

Finally, 4/8 NSOs trained census personnel (enumerators and supervisors) in order to strengthen the gender perspective in the census work and highlight the importance of gender equity, while 4/8 stated that it will implement this activity in its next round.

At the enumeration phase 5/8 NSOs have undertaken steps to mobilize and recruit women field personnel. The percentage of women field personnel was: in Jordan 35%; in Palestine 54%; and in UAE: 30%. However, it is expected that women field personnel will be limited in some of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries such as in Bahrain 2.5% of enumerators and 1% of supervisors.

Only 2/8 NSOs conducted publicity campaign (TV, radio, ,,,) and materials (posters, flyers,...) portraying gender concepts and terminologies involved in census topics throughout the period to sensitize respondents, both women and men. 5/8 stated they will either conduct similar campaigns or have conducted the usual census one to portray the importance of cooperation with census staff. 1/8 of NSO stated it is not planning.
Application of national or international standard classification of occupation and industry to provide detailed breakdown (4-digit) of women and men in type of occupation and industries and for further gender analysis was used in 4/8 of countries while 4/8 will be applying them in their next census.

In the post enumeration stage 5/8 of countries stated that they produce gender concerns in general census tabulation disaggregated by sex. In Bahrain: almost all pop & households census tables except characteristics of establishments, housing units and buildings. In Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine: 100%. 4/8 NSO stated that it will implement this activity in its next round

In addition, 3/8 NSO produce separate gender specific census outputs addressing typical gender issues from general census results and detailed gender sensitive data; 3/8 are planning to have specific gender publications gender issues at the national level; and 2/8 stated that there is no plan to have additional outputs on gender.

**Recommendations**

- Raise awareness on gender concepts through advocacy and literacy programmes to reflect the importance of gender statistics in gauging gender disparity and achieving gender equality in the ESCWA region
- Develop guidelines on how to sensitize population censuses
- Establish and develop national and regional priority issues for collection and compilation of gender statistics for their utilization for gender analysis, planning and development
- Greater interaction between producers and users of data, including planners and women activists.
## Annex I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>10 December 1994</td>
<td>1 October 2004</td>
<td>(November 2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>20 April 1985</td>
<td>20 April 1995</td>
<td>20-21 April 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(...)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied Palestinian Territory</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9 December 1997</td>
<td>(1-16 December 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>1 December 1993</td>
<td>7 December 2003</td>
<td>(2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>16 March 1986</td>
<td>1 March 1997</td>
<td>(2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>16 March 2004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>17-23 December 1985</td>
<td>17 December 1995</td>
<td>5 December 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen- former Yemen Arab Republic</td>
<td>1-18 February 1986</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yemen - former Democratic Yemen</td>
<td>29-30 March 1988</td>
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</table>
Annex II

When did your country last conduct a population and housing census (YEAR)?

| Does your national statistical strategy include mainstreaming gender in all statistical work? |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | No | Will be included |

Was there a predefined plan to mainstream a gender perspective in the:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Operation</th>
<th>Tabulation</th>
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</table>

Which of the following auxiliary activities were (i) undertaken to mainstream a gender perspective into census, (ii) will be considered to be undertaken for next census, or (iii) will not be undertaken in future censuses:

(please mark X under appropriate column and provide further comments or elaboration)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Implemented</th>
<th>Will be implemented</th>
<th>Will NOT be implemented</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Pre-Enumeration Phase</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish gender cells/units at NSO and at the governorate offices to sensitize the census functionaries and handling of gender issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender orientation workshops for senior management of the NSO with the objective of providing exposure to gender concepts, insights into gender concerns in statistics and highlight importance of integrating gender concerns into the census</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a media/publicity materials portraying gender concepts and explaining gender terminologies and TV/radio campaigns at the national and sub-national levels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish gender-oriented technical committees or expert groups to deal specifically with gender concerns at the various stages of the census: questionnaire, manual preparation, media, project management, occupation and industrial classifications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop on mainstreaming gender in census for census experts and gender experts to develop consensus on integration of gender concerns in the census</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training of census personnel: enumerators and supervisors in order to strengthen the gender perspective in the census work and highlight the importance of gender equity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other, specify:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Enumeration Phase</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobilization/recruitment of female field personnel (kindly provide the percentage of enumerators and supervisors recruited to total number of personnel for each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct publicity campaign (TV, radio, ...) and materials (posters, flyers, ...) portraying gender concepts and terminologies involved in census topics throughout the period to sensitize respondents, both women and men</td>
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<tr>
<td>New gender specific approaches such as the application of national or international standard classification of occupation and industry to provide detailed breakdown (4-digit) of women and men in type of occupation and industries and for further gender analysis</td>
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<td>Other, specify:</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Post Enumeration Phase</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Produce gender concerns in general census tabulation disaggregated by sex (Kindly provide percentage of disaggregated tables out of total tables)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Produce separate gender specific census outputs addressing typical gender issues from general census results and detailed gender sensitive data (kindly provide name of outputs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other, specify:</td>
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