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STATISTICAL COMMISSION

SUMMARY OF INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL POPULATION CENSUS ACTIVITIES

(Paper prepared by the Secretariat for Consideration  
under Item 3(a) of the Agenda)

I. ACTIVITIES OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL AND ITS COMMISSIONS

1. The Economic and Social Council at its fourth session (February-March 1947), taking note of the recommendations of the Statistical Commission and the Population Commission, adopted a resolution recommending "that all such Member States as are proposing to take censuses in or around 1950 use comparable schedules, as far as it is possible to do so"; and requesting the Secretary-General,

....to offer advice and assistance to all such Member States as are prepared to take comparable population censuses, whether by complete enumeration or on the basis of a scientific sample.

(E/437, pages 19, 20)

2. The Population Commission at its second session (August 1947) requested the Secretary-General, to call the attention of Member Governments to

the need for making adequate provision, for the period of years required for the undertaking, to cover the preparatory work, the enumeration of the population, the tabulation of the data, and the publication of results...

and proposed a minimum list of subjects "for which comparability should be attempted in connection with the censuses to be undertaken in or around 1950." (E/571, page 5, and Annex II)

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT

3. On the basis of information received from Member Governments, the Secretariat is preparing a number of reports describing census definitions and procedures, including:

(a) Collation of Results of Population and Agriculture Censuses  
(Studies of Census Methods, No. 1)

(b) 1950 Censuses of Population - Preliminary Report of National and International Activities (Studies of Census Methods, No. 2)

/((c) Problems

- (c) Problems of Defining, Identifying and Measuring the Agricultural Population (Studies of Census Methods, No. 3)
- (d) Census Definition and Enumeration of the Labour Force (in process)
- (e) The Questions on Sex, Age, Marital Status and Education in Censuses of Population (in process)
- (f) Citizenship, Nationality and Mother Tongue (in process)
- (g) Urban-Rural Population Classification - Preliminary Report (in process)

4. It is anticipated that future reports will deal with further problems of standardization including tabulation standards, and census administration problems.

5. The minimum and supplementary lists of population census items proposed by the Population Commission were distributed to all Member Governments with a request for comments. A number of replies have been received which include detailed discussion and appraisal of the items. A summary of the replies received so far has been prepared and is available for the use of the Commission.

6. On the basis of these replies and the study of census definitions previously used by countries, the Secretariat with the co-operation of FAO and ILO has prepared a draft set of recommended definitions and standards for census items on which international comparability is most desirable. These draft recommendations are available as a separate document (E/CN.9/W.9) for consideration of the Commission and for such action as it may consider advisable.

7. A number of international agencies or organs are actively concerned with various aspects of censuses to be taken in 1950. These include the Statistical Commission, the Population Commission, the Statistical Office of the United Nations, the Population Division of the Department of Social Affairs, the FAO, the ILO and the Committee on the Census of the Americas of the Inter-American Statistical Institute.

8. Considering the desirability for co-ordination of the programmes of these bodies, the Statistical Office of the United Nations has sponsored a series of informal monthly meetings with representatives of the Population Division, the FAO and I.A.S.I. These meetings have served as a valuable medium for the exchange of information and have achieved a synthesis of views upon various technical matters connected with census plans.

### III. ACTIVITIES OF THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

9. Early in 1947 the FAO sent to the several Governments a preliminary ~~minimum~~ programme for the 1950 World Census of Agriculture and requested

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comments upon it. During the same year technicians of the European and American countries met in Rome and Washington respectively to exchange ideas in regard to the minimum programme. In December 1947 another meeting was held in London to consider the programme in under-developed countries. In all these regional meetings it was recommended that the agricultural census should be closely linked with the national population censuses.

#### IV. ACTIVITIES OF THE INTER-AMERICAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE

10. In September 1947, the Committee on the 1950 Census of the Americas held its first meeting in Washington, D. C., attended by statistical officers of the twenty-two American nations. At that meeting, the Committee was informed on the progress of census plans in the various American countries and considered the lists of items suggested by the Population Commission.

11. Among the actions of the Committee are: (1) a recommendation adopting various items as a minimum programme for population censuses and providing for study of other items by an interim Executive Committee; (2) a resolution expressing the views of the technicians of the American nations in regard to the agricultural census to be taken about 1950; (3) a proposal that in addition to censuses of population, housing and agriculture, various economic censuses should be included in the co-operative census programme of the American nations.

(A more detailed account of the activities of international and inter-governmental organizations is given in Studies of Census Methods, No. 2)

#### V. NATIONAL CENSUS ACTIVITIES

12. The following table summarizes available information for sixty-seven countries regarding the date of their last population census and the proposed date of their next census. The proposed dates for the American nations are based on their official participation in the programme of the 1950 Census of the Americas Committee of the I.A.S.I. Dates for the other countries are based on statements received from official statistical agencies.

Countries by Continent	Date of the last population census	Proposed year for the next population census
AFRICA		
Egypt . . . . .	26 March 1947	?
Union of South Africa . .	7 May 1946	1950
AMERICA		
Argentina . . . . .	10 May 1947	1950
Bolivia . . . . .	1 Sept. 1900	1950
Brazil . . . . .	1 Sept. 1940	1950
Canada . . . . .	1 June 1941	1951
Chile . . . . .	28 Nov. 1940	1950
Colombia . . . . .	5 July 1938	1950
Costa Rica . . . . .	2 May 1927	1950
Cuba . . . . .	25 July 1943	1950
Dominican Republic . . .	13 May 1935	1950
Ecuador . . . . .	---	1950
El Salvador . . . . .	1 May 1930	1950
Guatemala . . . . .	7 Apr. 1940	1950
Haiti . . . . .	1918-1919	1950
Honduras . . . . .	24 June 1945	1950
Mexico . . . . .	6 Mar. 1940	1950
Nicaragua . . . . .	23 May 1940	1950
Panama . . . . .	8 Sept. 1940	1950
Paraguay . . . . .	Mar.-Apr. 1936	1950
Peru . . . . .	9 June 1940	1950
United States . . . . .	1 Apr. 1940	1950
Uruguay . . . . .	12 Oct. 1908	1950
Venezuela . . . . .	7 Dec. 1941	1950
ASIA		
Burma . . . . .	5 Mar. 1941	?
China . . . . .	---	1950
India . . . . .	1 Mar. 1941	1951
Iran . . . . .	1939-1944	1950
Iraq . . . . .	19 Oct. 1947	?
Japan . . . . .	1 Oct. 1947	1950
Lebanon . . . . .	29 Oct. 1942	?
Philippines . . . . .	1 Jan. 1939	?
Siam (Thailand) . . . . .	14 May 1947	?
Syria . . . . .	1947	?
Turkey . . . . .	21 Oct. 1945	?

/EUROPE

Countries by Continent	Date of the last population census	Proposed year for the next population census
EUROPE		
Albania . . . . .	25 May 1930	?
Austria . . . . .	21 July 1946	?
Belgium . . . . .	31 Dec. 1947	*
Bulgaria. . . . .	31 Dec. 1946	?
Czechoslovakia. . . . .	22 May 1947	1950
Denmark . . . . .	15 June 1945	1950
Finland . . . . .	31 Dec. 1940	1950
France. . . . .	10 Mar. 1946	*
Germany . . . . .	30 Oct. 1946	?
Greece. . . . .	16 Oct. 1940	1950
Hungary . . . . .	31 Jan. 1941	*
Iceland . . . . .	2 Dec. 1940	*
Ireland . . . . .	12 May 1946	?
Italy . . . . .	15 Sept. 1944	?
Liechtenstein . . . . .	1 Dec. 1941	?
Luxembourg. . . . .	31 Dec. 1947	?
Monaco. . . . .	10 Mar. 1946	?
Netherlands . . . . .	30 May 1947	*
Norway. . . . .	3 Dec. 1946	1950
Poland. . . . .	14 Feb. 1946	1948
Portugal. . . . .	12 Dec. 1940	1950
Roumania. . . . .	15 Jan. 1948	?
Spain . . . . .	31 Dec. 1940	1950
Sweden. . . . .	31 Dec. 1945	1950
Switzerland . . . . .	1 Dec. 1941	*
United Kingdom		
England and Wales. . .	27 Apr. 1931	*
Northern Ireland . . .	28 Feb. 1937	*
Scotland . . . . .	27 Apr. 1931	*
Union of Soviet Socialist		
Republics. . . . .	17 Jan. 1939	?
Byelorussian S.S.R.. .	17 Jan. 1939	?
Ukrainian S.S.R. . . .	17 Jan. 1939	?
Yugoslavia. . . . .	1 Apr. 1931	*
OCEANIA		
Australia . . . . .	30 June 1947	?
New Zealand . . . . .	25 Sept. 1945	1951

\* According to established procedures census would normally be scheduled for some year around 1950 but no information has been received regarding the exact date.

## VI. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE COMMISSION

13. The Commission may wish to take note of the fact that, according to the preliminary information given in the above table, many countries are planning to take population censuses in or about 1950. Recognizing the basic importance of population data for the study and analysis of many social, economic and political problems, the Commission may wish to recommend that the Economic and Social Council urge Member Governments to take a national population census in or about 1950, and, in addition, to take steps to develop significant census data for their respective colonies, dependencies, non-self-governing and trust territories.

14. The Commission may also wish to recommend that the Economic and Social Council call the attention of the regional Economic Commissions to the worldwide programmes for censuses of agriculture and population with the request that these Commissions encourage the development of such programmes to the fullest extent.

15. The table of proposed census dates shows that many countries are now planning censuses where the necessary technical organization and skills may be insufficient for an adequate and satisfactory census. In view of the resolution of the Economic and Social Council requesting the Secretary-General to offer advice and assistance to all such Member States as are prepared to take comparable population censuses, the Commission may wish to consider the most effective means of mobilizing all available experience and technical personnel for the implementation of this programme.

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