



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
19 December 2015

Original: English

Statistical Commission

Forty-seventh session

8-11 March 2016

Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda*

Items for information

Demographic statistics

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, which was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2015/216 and past practices, presents the recent activities carried out by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat in the area of demographic statistics. It provides a summary of the implementation of the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme, with a focus on the development of the methodological guidelines for the management of population and housing censuses. It also provides information on activities relating to the promotion of the revised set of international statistical standards for civil registration and vital statistics. Furthermore, it provides information on the collection of statistics from the 2010 round of population and housing censuses through the *Demographic Yearbook* questionnaires and on activities relating to health statistics.

The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2016/1.



I. Introduction

1. The present report, which was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2015/216 and past practices, presents the recent activities carried out by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat in the area of demographic statistics. It provides a summary of the implementation of the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme, with a focus on the development of the methodological guidelines for the management of population and housing censuses. It also provides information on activities relating to the promotion of the revised set of international statistical standards for civil registration and vital statistics. Furthermore, it provides information on the collection of statistics from the 2010 round of population and housing censuses through the *Demographic Yearbook* questionnaires and on activities relating to health statistics.

II. 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme

2. The 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme was approved by the Statistical Commission at its forty-sixth session and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2015/10. The Programme recognizes population and housing censuses as one of the main sources of data for effective development planning and objective decision-making, especially in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Programme is aimed at ensuring that each Member State conducts a population and housing census at least once during the period 2015-2024 and disseminates the results widely.

3. In this context, the Statistics Division submitted the revised set of international standards in the form of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 3*, a publication that was adopted by the Statistical Commission at its forty-sixth session, providing a major methodological framework and guidance for the 2020 census round. As in previous rounds, the principles and recommendations will be accompanied by handbooks and manuals intended to provide more detailed and comprehensive information on critical components for conducting and using population and housing censuses.

4. Accordingly, the Statistics Division conducted an expert group meeting from 14 to 19 December 2015 to review the *Handbook on Census Management for Population and Housing Censuses*, which is being revised (and renamed the *Handbook on the Management of Population and Housing Censuses*) to align the management of traditional population and housing censuses with contemporary census practices, methods and techniques and the standards and methods contained in the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 3*. The participants provided comprehensive comments and suggestions on the draft, the finalization of which will involve a further round of consultations with members of the expert group. The final outcome will be presented to the Statistical Commission at its forty-eighth session.

5. The Statistics Division will, as in previous rounds, organize workshops to promote the revised principles and recommendations and other methodological materials, targeting all regions. Detailed schedules, subject matter and information

on participating countries and partners will be regularly posted on the website of the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme.

III. Implementation of the *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3*

6. After the endorsement of the *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 3*, by the Statistical Commission at its forty-fifth session, the Statistics Division undertook regional and subregional workshops to introduce and promote the revised set of international standards for civil registration and vital statistics. The workshops were held in Chile, Ethiopia, the Republic of Korea, Trinidad and Tobago and Turkey, with the participation of representatives of 69 countries and more than 120 statisticians, civil registrars and public health professionals. Detailed information on and the reports of the workshops are available on the Division's website, as are the schedules and subject matter for the workshops planned for 2016.

7. As is the case with all international statistical standards and guidelines, the revised principles and recommendations will be accompanied by handbooks and manuals in which specific areas are discussed in more detail. In that context, the Statistics Division has initiated the revision of the *Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems: Management, Operation and Maintenance*, with an expert group meeting on the subject planned for 2016.

8. The Division continues to serve as the secretariat for the Global Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Group and maintains the accompanying website, which provides information on the activities of all the members of the Group relating to improving civil registration and vital statistics. The membership currently includes 19 regional and international organizations. The Group met twice in 2015, in March and June, and established a task force to review existing methodologies to evaluate the coverage of vital events in countries.

IV. Collection of statistics through the *Demographic Yearbook* questionnaires on population and housing censuses

9. The *Demographic Yearbook* contains annual demographic statistics¹ and population and housing census statistics. The questionnaires on population and housing censuses pertain to general characteristics, economic characteristics, household characteristics, national data and selected city data.

10. Provided below is a brief summary of the availability in the *Demographic Yearbook* statistical database of selected population census data sets as at November 2015. The information refers to the population censuses from the 2010 round, which covered the period 2005-2014.

- In total, 198 countries or areas have reported data on total population, while 169 have reported data on population by age and sex.

¹ An overview of the response rate for these topics was submitted to the Statistical Commission in document [E/CN.3/2013/15](#).

- In total, 94 countries or areas have reported data on household characteristics, namely on population in households or on the number of households classified by several variables, such as type of living quarters, type of household, household size or relation to the head of household.
- In total, 102 countries or areas have reported data on economic characteristics, i.e. on population by activity status and age/sex, on population not economically active and age/sex and on employed population by several characteristics, such as status in employment, occupation, industry, marital status, age and sex.

11. All the census data collected are disseminated electronically in an incremental manner using the UNdata portal. The complete list of census topics and the individual data sets within each topic are available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dybcensusdata.htm>.

V. Activities relating to health statistics

12. The Statistics Division was represented on the steering committee for the summit on measurement and accountability for results in health, organized by the United States Agency for International Development, the World Bank Group and the World Health Organization in Washington, D.C., from 9 to 11 June 2015. The event offered the global health community an opportunity to take stock of the current state of health information systems and identify innovative approaches and strategic investments that could strengthen data availability, quality and use in the post-2015 era. The participants adopted a road map and a five-point call to action (see <http://ma4health.hsaccess.org/roadmap>).

13. Building upon the outcome of the summit, a health data collaborative is to be established in January 2016 to facilitate and accelerate progress in strengthening country systems for monitoring progress and performance for learning and accountability within the context of the health-related Sustainable Development Goals. It will include representatives of countries (from both health and statistical agencies), the Statistics Division and United Nations agencies, multilateral institutions, bilateral donors, civil society organizations and academic institutions, with a small secretariat hosted by the World Health Organization.

VI. Action required of the Commission

14. The Commission is invited to take note of the present report.
