

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL
E/CN.3/185
9 February 1954
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

STATISTICAL COMMISSION
Eighth session
(Item 11 (f) of the provisional agenda)

POPULATION CENSUS ACTIVITIES
(Memorandum prepared by the Secretary-General)

1. It was reported at the seventh session of the Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/148) that, within the decade ending in 1952, population censuses had been conducted in 155 out of 239 areas of the world, covering 1,440 million persons, or nearly 60 per cent of the world's population. Additional census activity was maintained during 1953, increasing appreciably the proportion of the world population recently enumerated. The list of censuses taken during the period 1950-1953, given in Appendix I, includes the additional major areas of Ceylon, China (mainland), Cuba and Yugoslavia. The map given as Appendix II shows the total progress made in this field of statistics since the end of the war period.

2. Other countries which have not had a recent census are now making definite plans or arrangements for a census in the near future. Libya, Peru and Uruguay are among this group of countries.

Summary of United Nations activities

3. The United Nations activities relating to population censuses are summarized briefly below under the headings (a) methodological studies (b) development of standards (c) training and demonstration (d) expert advice (e) collection and publication of recent census data.

4. Methodological studies. The series of Studies of Census Methods, prepared co-operatively from 1947 to 1949 by the Statistical Office of the United Nations, the Population Division of the United Nations Department of

Social Affairs, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Labour Office, were embodied later in three major technical publications: Population Census Handbook (Provisional Edition, Lake Success, New York 1949), Population Census Methods (Population Studies, No. 4, Lake Success, New York, 1949) and Application of International Standards to Census Data on the Economically Active Population (Population Studies, No. 9, New York, 1951).

A definitive edition of the Population Census Handbook, which brings together to a single volume all of the current international recommendations relating to population censuses, is now in press.

5. Development of standards. The Population Commission and the Statistical Commission in their sessions during the years 1947-1951 formulated various recommendations or suggested methods for increasing the quality and comparability of the results from the 1950-1953 population censuses. The FAO and ILO and the Inter-American Statistical Institute have participated in this responsibility for the development of international census standards. From a study of the definitions, classifications and methods used in various countries and through a series of technical meetings, the basic standards for the 1950 population censuses were developed. These recommendations related to the items to be investigated, standard definitions, and some suggestions regarding tabulation. Preliminary study of the methods used in recent censuses indicates that practically all countries have adhered, in general, to these international recommendations in their procedures.

6. Training and demonstration. The Statistical Office of the United Nations organized and participated in various international group training activities especially designed for the 1950 population censuses. Four regional training courses in population and agricultural censuses were sponsored by the United Nations, FAO, other international agencies and national governments. One of the important features of these training courses was the emphasis given to the practical application of census techniques ranging from the design of the questionnaire to the planning and conduct of experimental censuses. The courses were attended by some 189 national technicians and officials, most of whom subsequently had occasion to put into practice their acquired knowledge

in the planning and taking of the population censuses of their countries. In addition to the training centres organized primarily by the United Nations and FAO, the Statistical Office participated in several projects for training in census tabulation procedures and in various other conferences and seminars designed for training and demonstration purposes.

7. Expert advice. Another form of technical assistance for the 1950 population censuses was the provision of expert advice by the United Nations to a number of governments at their request. Some countries received United Nations assistance for one or more phases of the census planning, processing or publication, and some received assistance for the entire census operation. The following are among the countries which have obtained such expert advice from the United Nations: Bolivia, Burma, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Greece, Libya, Pakistan, Panama and Paraguay. In several instances, the work of the United Nations consultants is continuing, since the national censuses are not completed.

8. Collection and publication of recent census data. In many countries, especially those in which the census was taken in 1952 or 1953, the tabulation and publication of the results is not yet completed. For this reason, it is not yet possible to give an accurate summary of the data which will be available. The table in Appendix III lists the items enumerated in 41 countries since 1950. Considering the almost universal use of the most essential items, there is reason to expect that new census information now becoming available will be far superior in comparability and country coverage than at any time in the past.

9. Selected census data (total population, population of cities and provinces, age and sex distributions, etc.) are published as they become available in successive issues of the Demographic Yearbook.

10. More detailed results of the 1950-53 censuses are now being collected and work is now under way on the preparation of a special compilation of census data which will include the tabulations of major value for international purposes.

Continuing Work Programme

11. At its seventh session the Statistical Commission gave high priority to the continuing work on population census methods, and the Population Commission, in the report of its seventh session, drew attention to the importance of evaluating, as soon as feasible, all the experience gained in conducting recent censuses, and of taking steps to use this information in developing plans for future censuses.

12. The Statistical Office has now collected the various schedules, instructions, classifications and other materials used in national censuses taken in 1950-53. Studies now under way will show the extent to which the more detailed United Nations recommendations regarding definitions and classifications have been found useful by the different countries. Such studies will also give some indication of the character and scope of future recommendations which will be of greatest value in increasing national and international utility of census data.

13. Without minimizing the success that international work in improving population censuses has had, the experience gained shows several ways in which the programme can yield greater results for the future.

14. In the first place, it is essential that international recommendations be agreed upon at an earlier date than in the past. The United Nations recommendations for the 1950-51 censuses, approved in successive revisions during 1947, 1948, 1949 and 1950, were, in many instances, too late to have received thorough consideration by national census planners. Accordingly, the continuing programme of the Statistical Office in this field involves study and appraisal of recent experience with a view to the preparation of draft recommendations for the preliminary consideration of the Statistical Commission at its ninth session in 1956. Revised recommendations, modified in accordance with Commission views and official opinions of governments, could be given final consideration by the Statistical Commission at its tenth session in 1958. Final formulation of international recommendations at this date would greatly increase their utility.

15. The second major point gained from past experience is that international suggestions or recommendations could be more helpful in indicating the principal types of tabulations of greatest value for international and national purposes. The national census tabulating programme is obviously a national responsibility. However, although complete tabulations for all recent censuses are not yet available, it is clear that in some instances essential information will remain untabulated due to the lack of a planned and balanced tabulation programme. Simple, but well conceived and technically correct, international suggestions will be of great value to many countries.

16. Other aspects of the census which should receive more emphasis in the future are the importance of early national planning and testing of proposed procedures, adoption of improved methods of mapping for census purposes, the need in certain areas for more adequate education for obtaining the co-operation of the public, the training of key personnel and the increased use of sampling in the various stages of the census operations.

APPENDIX I

POPULATION CENSUSES TAKEN DURING THE PERIOD
 1950-1953, AND DATE OF ENUMERATION

<u>Country</u>	<u>Date of Census</u>		
<u>Africa</u>			
Union of South Africa	8	V	1951
<u>Other Areas</u>			
Angola	30	XII	1950
Cameroons (Br. Adm.)			1953
Cameroons (Fr. Adm.)	13	XI	1951
Cape Verde Islands	15	XII	1950
Comoro Islands		X	1951
French Equatorial Africa	31	VII	1951
French Somaliland		VI	1951
French West Africa	28	VI	1951
Cambia	4	XI	1951
Madagascar	-	X	1951
Mauritius and dependencies	29	VI	1952
Moroccan Protectorate (Northern Zone)	31	XII	1950
Morocco (French)	15	IV	1951 ^{1/}
Mozambique	21	IX	1950
Nigeria			1952-1953
Northern Rhodesia	30	VI	1950
Portuguese Guinea	15	VI	1950
Sao Tome and Principe	15	XII	1950
South West Africa	8	V	1951
Spanish Guinea	31	XII	1950
Spanish Possessions in North Africa:			
Ceuta	31	XII	1950
Melilla	31	XII	1950
Spanish West Africa	31	XII	1950
Togoland (Fr. Adm.)	8	V	1952

1/ Census of the European and Jewish population; the Moslem population was enumerated in April 1952.

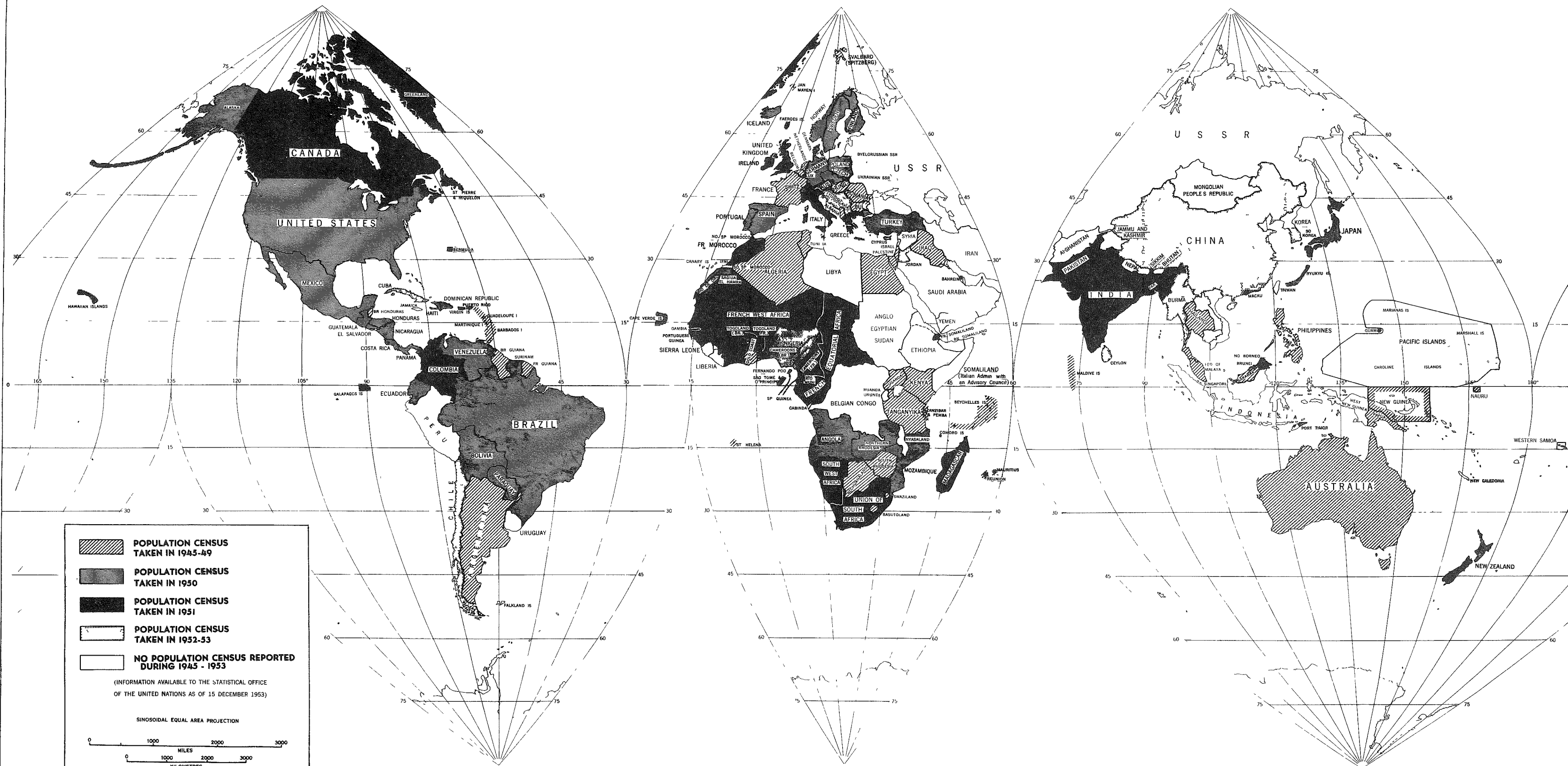
<u>Country</u>	<u>Date of Census</u>		
<u>North America</u>			
Canada	1	VI	1951
Costa Rica	22	V	1950
Cuba	28	I	1953
Dominican Republic	6	VIII	1950
El Salvador	13	VI	1950
Guatemala	18	IV	1950
Haiti	7	VIII	1950
Honduras	18	VI	1950
Mexico	6	VI	1950
Nicaragua	31	V	1950
Panama	10	XII	1950
United States	1	IV	1950
<u>Other Areas</u>			
Alaska	1	IV	1950
Bermuda	-	X	1950
Canal Zone	1	IV	1950
Greenland	31	XII	1951
Puerto Rico	1	IV	1950
St. Pierre and Miquelon	14	V	1951
Virgin Islands	1	IV	1950
<u>South America</u>			
Bolivia	5	IX	1950
Brazil	1	VII	1950
Chile	24	IV	1952
Colombia	9	V	1951
Ecuador	29	XI	1950
Paraguay	28	X	1950
Venezuela	26	XI	1950
<u>Other Areas</u>			
Surinam	1	XI	1950

<u>Country</u>	<u>Date of Census</u>		
<u>Asia</u>			
Bahrain	3	III	1950
Burma			1952-1953 <u>2/</u>
Ceylon	20	III	1953
China (Mainland)	30	VI	1953
India	1	III	1951
Japan	1	X	1950
Jordan	-	VIII	1952
Pakistan	28	II	1951
South Korea	31	XII	1952
Turkey	22	X	1950
<u>Other Areas</u>			
French India	29	XI	1951
Macau	4	VI	1950
North Borneo	4	VI	1951
Portuguese India	15	XII	1950
Portuguese Timor	-	IX-XII	1950
Ryukyu Islands	1	XII	1950
<u>Europe</u>			
Austria	1	VI	1951
Czechoslovakia	1	III	1950
Denmark (ex. Faeroe Islands)	7	XI	1950
Faeroe Islands	31	XII	1950
Finland	31	XII	1950
France:			
Saar	14	XI	1951
Germany:			
East Berlin	31	VIII	1950
West Berlin	13	IX	1950
Democratic Republic	31	VIII	1950
Federal Republic	13	IX	1950
Greece	7	IV	1951
Iceland	1	XII	1950
Ireland, Rep. of	8	IV	1951
Italy	4	XI	1951
Liechtenstein	1	XII	1950

2/ A multiple stage census; the enumeration will continue during 1954.

<u>Country</u>	<u>Date of Census</u>		
<u>Europe (continued)</u>			
Monaco	4	I	1951
Norway	1	XII	1950
Poland	3	XII	1950
Portugal	15	XII	1950
Spain	31	XII	1950
Sweden	31	XII	1950
Switzerland	1	XII	1950
United Kingdom	8	IV	1951
Yugoslavia	31	III	1953
<u>Other Areas</u>			
Channel Islands	8	IV	1951
Gibraltar	3	VII	1951
Isle of Man	8	IV	1951
Trieste	4	XI	1951
<u>Oceania</u>			
New Zealand	17	IV	1951
<u>Other Areas</u>			
American Samoa	1	IV	1950
Cook Islands	25	IX	1951
French Oceania	17	IX	1951
Guam	1	IV	1950
Hawaii	1	IV	1950
New Caledonia	9	X	1951
Niue	27	IX	1951
Tokelau	25	IX	1951
Western Samoa	25	IX	1951

CENSUSES OF POPULATION TAKEN IN THE WORLD DURING 1945 - 1953



POPULATION CENSUS TAKEN IN 1945-49

POPULATION CENSUS TAKEN IN 1950

POPULATION CENSUS TAKEN IN 1951

POPULATION CENSUS TAKEN IN 1952-53

NO POPULATION CENSUS REPORTED DURING 1945 - 1953

(INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS AS OF 15 DECEMBER 1953)

SINOSOIDAL EQUAL AREA PROJECTION

0 1000 2000 3000
MILES

0 1000 2000 3000
KILOMETRES

The boundaries shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

