



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 July 2015

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses

Seventeenth Meeting

Geneva, 30 September to 2 October 2015

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda and election of officers

Annotated provisional agenda

To be held in room V at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, starting at 9:30 am on Wednesday 30 September 2015.

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda and election of officers
2. Efficient approaches for the census in a time of increasing financial constraints
3. Innovations planned for 2020 census round, and results of tests
4. Experiences with census users: who they are, what they need, how they are involved
5. Grid statistics: opportunities and challenges
6. Expected issues in complying with the new CES Recommendations (particularly by countries using registers or surveys) and results of work to address them
7. Future work
8. Other business.

II. Annotations

The meeting is organised jointly with Eurostat following the provisions of the UNECE Statistical Programme for 2015, adopted by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) and approved by the UNECE Executive Committee.



1. Adoption of the agenda and election of officers

The UNECE in cooperation with Eurostat organize regularly meetings for the Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses. The main purpose of the meetings is to facilitate the exchange of experiences among countries, increase knowledge on various issues related to the planning and conduction of population and housing censuses, and develop common CES Recommendations for the Censuses of Population and Housing. This results in increased capacity by countries to plan and conduct the population and housing censuses and produce data comparable across countries. The proposed provisional agenda will be presented for the approval by the participants of the meeting.

2. Efficient approaches for the census in a time of increasing financial constraints

In most countries, also as a consequence of the continuing international financial crisis, NSOs and census agencies face increasing financial constraints, like other administrations. As a result, population and housing censuses, like other surveys, have often to be conducted with limited budget, and in certain cases with significant budget reductions compared to previous censuses. In some countries the census budget is approved only at a relatively late stage of the census preparations. In these cases, in planning the census some contingency plans have to be foreseen to deal with the case that the budget actually allocated is lower than the budget originally expected.

At the same time, when censuses include partial or full field data collection, this is often complicated by the increasing difficulty to enumerate specific population groups, the increasing reluctance of the population to participate in the enumeration, and in some countries by the voluntary character of the participation in the census. In order to address these issues, census planners need to take specific measures, which may require additional costs.

In this context, most countries have taken or are planning to take initiatives to reduce the census costs. They may include changing census methodology (for instance using available data from registers in order to reduce data collection costs), adopting alternative enumeration methods (for instance, using the mail instead of enumerators for delivery or collection of forms), or adopting innovative technology (internet response, paperless technology or handheld devices for field operations). They may also include transformational strategies where NSOs use the census to transform/share services (like data collection) across all parts of the organisation.

In this session countries are expected to share experiences on approaches and strategies developed with the objective of reducing the census budget, or limiting its increase. Technical aspects related to methodological or technological solutions would be covered under item 3, presented below.

3. Innovations planned for 2020 census round, and results of tests

Information on national practices in the 2010 census round shows clearly that a significant number of UNECE countries, particularly in Western Europe, have adopted an alternative methodology, often for the first time, in most cases making use of data from registers. Innovative census technologies, such as the internet response, have been implemented in a number of countries and have become the main enumeration method in some of them. It is expected that this trend will continue for the 2020 census round, with even more countries

conducting a register-based or combined census, offering the internet response, or implementing other innovative methods or technologies.

In this session countries will discuss their plans for the 2020 census round with regard in particular to alternative census methodology, enumeration methods and innovative technology. The results of tests, when available, will be presented, so that the experiences of single countries will be evaluated, discussed and possibly compared with those from other countries.

4. Experiences with census users: who they are, what they need, how they are involved

An important dimension of quality in statistics is the relevance of statistical information, defined as the degree to which it meets the needs of users. One of the challenges for the census is to try to satisfy as much as possible user requirements, taking into account resource limitations and other constraints. It is therefore very important for census planners to know who the census users are, to communicate with them to understand what are their needs, and to involve them in the various stages of the census process, from the content development to the dissemination phase.

In this session, countries will exchange their experiences with census users, and present good practices that could be followed by other countries. For instance, knowing the benefits that users have derived from the census, and quantifying their financial value could be used as part of the business case for the census, especially in the context of tightening budgets.

Various categories of users will be considered as far as possible with their specific needs, including users of census data within the NSOs (for instance, those who produce population estimates and projections).

5. Grid statistics: opportunities and challenges

One of the new topics introduced for the first time in the CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round is the *population grid*, based on one square kilometre grid cells. Although this is a derived non-core topic, countries are urged to consider adopting the use of grid square data (for EU countries, grid referenced statistics is considered a priority for development in social statistics). Some countries have already accumulated experience in producing grid statistics as outputs of their censuses, while others still have limited experience. The session will provide an opportunity to exchange experiences, presents results, discuss opportunities and challenges.

6. Expected issues in complying with the new CES Recommendations (particularly by countries using registers or surveys) and results of work to address them

The new CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round are expected to be adopted by CES in June 2015. In this session, countries will discuss various issues that they expect to face in relation to planning and conducting the next census in compliance with the new CES Recommendations. It can be expected that a number of issues could be faced in particular by countries that plan to use data from registers or sample surveys, although the new Recommendations have been drafted taking into account the increasing variability of census methods and data sources used by countries. Other issues that can be expected to be discussed in this session may refer to specific changes in the Recommendations with regard to definitions, classifications or status (core or non-core) of selected census topics.

7. Future work

In this session, the plans for future work to implement the CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round will be presented and discussed.

8. Other business

In this session, the experts may discuss additional census-related items proposed by the Secretariat or the participants.
