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Joint UNECE-Eurostat Work Session on Population Censuses
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(Geneva, 23-25 November 2004)

Session 1– Invited paper

**THE JOINT ECE/EUROSTAT PROGRAMME
ON THE 2010 POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUSES**

Note by the Joint ECE-Eurostat Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses*

I. Introduction

1. This note presents some general information on the Joint ECE-Eurostat Programme on the 2010 Population and Housing Censuses, and in particular on the activities carried out in the course of 2004 by the Joint ECE-Eurostat Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses and the plans for future work to be done to finalise the new census recommendations.

II. Background

2. In May 2003, the Joint ECE-Eurostat Work Session on Population and Housing Censuses discussed the work plan for producing an updated set of “Recommendations for the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses in the ECE Region” and approved a tentative work plan, culminating in the submission of the new recommendations to the June 2007 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES). A Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses was also appointed to guide future work in this area.

* This note is mainly based on information contained in various reports submitted to the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians and prepared by the ECE Secretariat or the Steering Group on Population and housing censuses between October 2003 and October 2004.

3. In June 2003, the CES took note of the proposed work plan and asked the Bureau to review the timetable for the programme, with the aim of accelerating the work in this area and finalising the new recommendations before 2007.

4. Following the request by the Conference, the ECE Secretariat prepared a revised timetable for the programme, according to which the new set of recommendations would be submitted for adoption by the CES in June 2006. In October 2003, the CES Bureau approved the revised timetable and the Terms of Reference of the Steering Group.

III. Work done by the Steering Group in 2004

5. The Steering Group, at its first meeting in Geneva on 19-20 January 2004, discussed the structure of the new census recommendations, and proposed to add a new expanded section on census methodology and technology, covering issues such as: possible ways in which registers can be used for censuses; possible use of sampling techniques; the so-called “rolling censuses”; the publicity campaign; the evaluation, etc.

6. The Steering Group proposed that the revision of the recommendations would focus on selected areas, including: Families and households; Migration; Place of usual residence; and Institutional households. In addition to these areas, the Steering Group also discussed other topics that could possibly be considered for in-depth revision or inclusion in the recommendations, including: economic activity; income; national identity; language; civil partnership; health and disability; the elderly. It was also agreed that the Task Force on Families and Households would work on the section of the recommendations on families and households, and that other existing groups would be contacted to work on specific parts of the recommendations.

7. With regard to the tabulation programme, the Steering Group noted that the recommended tabulation programme included in the 2000 edition of the recommendations had not been used widely, since most countries produced census tabulations based on the EU tabulation programme and/or the tabulation programme included in the World Recommendations. Therefore, the Steering Group proposed that the 2010 recommendations would not include a tabulation programme.

8. The Steering Group also discussed and finalised the questionnaire that the ECE was planning to send out to countries to obtain information on the extent to which they complied with the recommendations for the 2000 round of censuses, and on plans for the 2010 censuses.

9. The ECE questionnaire was sent out in March 2004 and the replies were processed by the ECE Secretariat in the period April-May 2004. Between May and November 2004 the results were analysed by various members of the Steering Group and of the Task Force on Families and Households. Several reports were drafted on the methods and definitions used by member countries in the 2000 round and on plans for the 2010 round of censuses, to be used as the basis for discussion at the Joint ECE-Eurostat Work Sessions on Population Censuses (23-25 November 2004) and on Housing Censuses (26 November 2004).

10. The Steering Group also approved the agenda of the two Work Sessions, and agreed with the ECE proposal to organise, on the occasion of the two work sessions, a one-day seminar on new methods for population censuses (22 November 2004).

11. In September 2004, ECE and Eurostat presented the work plan leading to the preparation of new census recommendations for the 2010 round of censuses in the ECE region at two meetings organised by UNSD in New York: the “United Nations Symposium on Population and Housing Censuses” (13-14 September) and the “United Nations Expert Group Meeting to Review Critical Issues Relevant to the Planning of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses (2005-2014)” (15-17 September 2004)¹. This was an opportunity to coordinate the census activities in the ECE region with the activities promoted by UNSD at a global level (in particular, the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme) and with other activities promoted in other regions.

IV. Next steps

12. It is expected that the two November 2004 Work Sessions will provide substantive guidance on the structure of the new census recommendations and on specific issues that need to be reviewed or added. The Work Sessions will also represent an opportunity to discuss in detail the process to be followed for the revision of the recommendations, and in particular to identify “who does what”. The Seminar on new methods for population censuses (22 November 2004) should also provide useful indications with regard to the new expanded part of the census recommendations on census methodology.

13. In the period from December 2004 to May 2005, the working groups and experts participating in the programme will work on a draft text for the new census recommendations according to the decisions taken at the work sessions. After a review by the Steering Group (SG), during the summer of 2005 the draft new recommendations will be sent to member countries for review.

14. In April 2005, the Joint ECE-Eurostat Work Session on Registers and Administrative Records for Social and Demographic Statistics (tentative dates: 11-13 April 2005) will discuss the use of registers and administrative sources for population and housing censuses, and the outcome of the work session will feed into the work on the new recommendations.

15. In November 2005, a Meeting on Population and Housing Censuses will review the draft new recommendations based on the inputs of the working groups and comments provided by countries. It is expected that at this stage the new recommendations will be in “almost final” version, and only minor changes will be necessary.

16. Between December 2005 and March 2006, the new recommendations will be finalised by the ECE, Eurostat and the SG, taking into account the outcome of the November 2005 meeting. Finally, in March 2006 the final draft of the census recommendations for the 2010 census round will be submitted to the Conference of European Statisticians for approval at the June 2006 plenary session.

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¹ The documents for these meetings are available on the website of UNSD at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/census4.htm>