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Joint UNECE-Eurostat Work Session on Housing Censuses
Organized in cooperation with UNFPA
(Geneva, 26 November 2004)

Session 1– Invited paper

**COUNTRIES' PLANS FOR THE 2010 CENSUSES:
RESULTS OF THE ECE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Submitted by the Office for National Statistics, UK *

Housing

1. Table 15 shows that the core questions on **number of occupants, number of rooms and type of ownership** are to be included by almost all countries that responded to the questionnaire.

* Paper prepared by Ian White on request by the Joint ECE-Eurostat Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses. The paper is based on the results of the ECE Questionnaire on Population and Housing Censuses, which was sent to ECE member countries in Spring 2004 to collect information on the extent to which they complied with the 2000 recommendations and on plans for the 2010 censuses. This paper should be read together with the other paper with same title and symbol (WP.2/Rev.1) prepared for the Joint UNECE-Eurostat Work Session on Population Censuses (23-25 November 2004)

Table 15 Topics to be included in the 2010 round of censuses: housing units and living quarters (core topics)

| UN-ECE Recommendation | Response | | | | No response |
|-----------------------------|----------|---|---|----|-------------|
| | R | C | S | N | |
| Number of occupants | 37 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 8 |
| Number of rooms | 35 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 7 |
| Type of ownership | 33 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| Location of living quarters | 31 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 8 |
| Type of heating | 28 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| Type of living quarters | 27 | 9 | 0 | 3 | 8 |
| Tenure status | 26 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 11 |
| Bathing facilities | 26 | 2 | 0 | 12 | 7 |
| Water supply system | 24 | 3 | 1 | 12 | 7 |
| Toilet facilities | 24 | 3 | 2 | 11 | 7 |
| Occupancy status | 23 | 9 | 1 | 9 | 7 |
| Kitchen | 22 | 4 | 0 | 14 | 7 |

Key to table

| | |
|---|---|
| R | To be included as recommended |
| C | Being included with some changes |
| S | Being included with substantial changes |
| N | Not being included |

2. In contrast, the questions relating to the availability of household amenities, such as **bathing and toilet facilities, the water supply system and kitchens** are not being considered by a significant proportion of countries (just over a quarter). For a number of these (such as Australia, Canada, Netherlands, Sweden, the US and the UK for example) availability of such amenities is seen as providing an increasingly less effective indicator of poor housing conditions. However, only half of these countries are also considering omitting the core question on **type of heating**, which may be regarded as a more discriminating variable.

3. A seemingly anomalous result of the survey is the apparent intention of seven of the responding countries not to collect information relating to the **location of living quarters**. However, in the light of the fact that all these countries report that they intend to collect information on **place of usual residence** in their population censuses we conclude that this is more likely to be the result of a misunderstanding of either the questionnaire or the 2000 Recommendations themselves.

4. Among the non-core questions relating to housing units and living quarters shown in Table 16 there is a fairly marked gradation from high compliance with the question on **useful and/or living floor space**, for which a rather surprisingly high number of countries (some 26 in all) report they propose adopting the 2000 Recommendations, to relatively low compliance with the questions on household amenities such as telephone, cooking facilities and consumer goods, none of which will be asked by more than half the responding countries in their 2010 round of censuses.

Table 16 Topics to be included in the 2010 round of censuses: housing units and living quarters (non-core topics)

| UN-ECE Recommendation | Response | | | | No response |
|----------------------------------|----------|---|---|----|-------------|
| | R | C | S | N | |
| Useful and/or living floor space | 26 | 2 | 0 | 10 | 9 |
| Main type of heating energy | 22 | 3 | 2 | 11 | 9 |
| Piped gas | 21 | 2 | 1 | 14 | 9 |
| Rent | 18 | 4 | 0 | 16 | 9 |
| Single/shared occupancy | 17 | 6 | 0 | 16 | 8 |
| Type of sewage disposal system | 16 | 4 | 3 | 14 | 10 |
| Hot water | 16 | 2 | 0 | 20 | 9 |
| Position of dwelling in building | 15 | 2 | 2 | 18 | 10 |
| Electricity | 15 | 3 | 0 | 20 | 9 |
| Type of vacancy | 15 | 4 | 0 | 19 | 9 |
| Number of cars available | 11 | 4 | 0 | 21 | 11 |
| Telephone | 9 | 3 | 0 | 24 | 11 |
| Cooking facilities | 8 | 2 | 0 | 27 | 10 |
| Durable consumer good | 7 | 3 | 1 | 23 | 13 |

Key to table

| | |
|---|---|
| R | To be included as recommended |
| C | Being included with some changes |
| S | Being included with substantial changes |
| N | Not being included |

5. Whereas a question on the availability of **pipéd gas** is to be included in one form or other by almost two thirds of the responding countries, a similar question on the availability of **electricity** will only be included by 18 countries.

6. As with the core questions on **bathing** and **toilet facilities** and **kitchens**, many countries will regard information on access to a **car**, a **telephone** and **cooking facilities** as increasingly less valuable as a measure of poor housing conditions. But it is surprising perhaps, in view of its possible use as measures of social disadvantage and dependency on public transport, that only 15 countries, seemingly, are planning to include a question on the **number of cars available to the household**. Many of the countries that do not plan for such a question, but not all, however, are Eastern European or former Soviet states where general levels of car ownership may be expected to be significantly lower than the average throughout the ECE region.

7. Table 17 shows that the core questions on **period of construction** and **type of building** are being included in the next round of censuses by most countries that responded to the questionnaire, and that the 2000 Recommendations will be followed in most cases.

8. However, some responses to the non-core questions relating to buildings suggest that the guidance offered by the current Recommendations may not be entirely clear in every case. Responses suggest, for example, that some countries have interpreted the question on **number of floors** as relating to the *dwelling* rather than the *building* of which the dwelling is part. Also the question on **number of dwellings in the building** is seemingly being included by some countries (such as France and Romania) that have not reported including questions on buildings in the next round of censuses.

Table 17 Topics to be included in the 2010 round of censuses: buildings

| UN-ECE Recommendation | Response | | | | No response |
|------------------------------|----------|---|---|----|-------------|
| | R | C | S | N | |
| <i>Core topics</i> | | | | | |
| Period of construction | 28 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 8 |
| Type of building | 25 | 5 | 0 | 8 | 9 |
| <i>Non-core topics</i> | | | | | |
| No. of dwellings in building | 23 | 2 | 0 | 12 | 10 |
| No. of floors in building | 21 | 2 | 0 | 12 | 10 |
| Construction materials | 17 | 0 | 1 | 19 | 10 |
| Lift | 8 | 0 | 2 | 24 | 13 |
| Farm building | 7 | 1 | 2 | 24 | 13 |
| State of repair | 3 | 0 | 1 | 31 | 12 |

Key to table

| | |
|---|---|
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9. We note that the current Recommendations offer no guidance at all in respect of the question on state of repair nor the question on **whether the building is a farm building or not**. However, in the case of the latter question, less than a half of responding countries see a need to collect specific information that distinguishes between **farm and non-farm buildings**. Not surprisingly, all are countries where there is a heavy economic dependence on agricultural industry - Canada and Sweden being the only ones that are not eastern European or former Soviet states.

10. Only three countries (Canada, Finland and Switzerland) report that they plan to include a question on **state of repair of building** in the 2010 round.
