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Population and Housing Censuses
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(Geneva, 12-16 December 2005)**

Supporting paper

**2010 WORLD PROGRAMME ON POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUSES
MEETING OF TECHNICAL SUBGROUP 1-3 ON
“CORE SET OF OUTPUTS AND TABULATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL
DISSEMINATION”
(Dublin 13-14 October, 2005)**

Follow-up note to UNECE

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The purpose of this note is to share with UNECE issues raised at the Technical Subgroup 1-3 meeting which may impact the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations for the 2010 Round of Censuses. The minutes of this meeting are being prepared and will be circulated shortly.

1. Introduction

The purpose of the Technical Subgroup 1-3 meeting was to review the draft set of recommended tables proposed by UNSD for the 2010 Round of Censuses. The output from this meeting will be forwarded in the first instance to WG1 and following amendments, if any, to the drafting group prior to general circulation to the Expert Working Group.

One of the objectives was to synchronize the content of the proposed UNSD tables, to be published in the Demographic Yearbook, with the tabulation programmes of Eurostat and the ILO. UNECE has already approved adopting the Eurostat tabulation programme.

An outcome of the meeting was the strong recommendation that the “recommended” set of tables of the UNSD be identical to the recommended set of tables for the countries that follow the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations. The differences in the table programmes for the 2000 Census round led to substantial double work in the NSOs who had to tabulate two different sets of resembling tables. Quite understandably, this was criticized by some NSOs.

The UNSD in preparing its recommended set of tables took into account the present set of Eurostat tables recommended, as well as the tables shown in the UN Demographic Yearbook. The Technical Subgroup 1-3 took particular care that there should be as much correspondence as possible between the “core topics” of the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations and the UNSD recommendations, while also accepting that there may be justifiable differences between the two. This correspondence has largely been achieved and promotes the use of a unique set of recommended tables. The resulting contents of the UNSD recommended set of tables is deemed to cover the most important needs for the countries that follow the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations.

However, some questions remain open. These should be reconsidered during the next discussion of the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations in December 2005:

2. Terminology

Technical Subgroup 1-3 is proposing, for the global UN tabulation programme, to use the terms *recommended* and *basic essential* rather than *core* to define the sets of tables. In the main text of the Global UN Principles and Recommendations, the term *core* will however be used to define the recommended topics for collection. In order not to diminish the importance for some countries of the other topics, they will be presented without a heading rather than with the term *non-core* used by the UNECE/Eurostat.

Though not discussed at the meeting, there are also some differences in the order and groupings of the topics. The main differences are the regrouping of internal migration and international migration topics by UNECE/Eurostat and their splitting of demographic and ethnocultural topics.

3. Differences between UNSD and UNECE/Eurostat core topics¹

The proposed UN Global Principles and Recommendations contain 33 core topics which are presented in Appendix 1. These core topics were drawn from the proposed UNSD recommended

¹ For the intention of this paper:

- The *core topics according to the UNSD recommendations* have been identified by the technical subgroup 1.3 during the meeting in Dublin. They are those that are a condition to fill in the UNSD recommended set of tables agreed on during that meeting.
- *Core topics according to the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations* are those identified as core topics in the “Recommendations for the 2010 census of population and housing - Draft 04 October 2005” (CES/AC.6/2005/WP.1).

tables, harmonized with those of UNECE/Eurostat and ILO. The list does not include derived core topics.

There are differences between the proposed UNSD core topics and the current set of draft UNECE/Eurostat core topics. Details are presented in Appendix 2 while Appendix 3 prioritizes the discussion. **It will be important to review these differences and either reconcile them or recognize them.**

3.1 Topics considered *core* by UNSD and not by UNECE/Eurostat

There are a few topics that are core topics in the UNSD recommendations, but are either non-core or not present in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations. There should be consideration on how to treat these inconsistencies.

- *Should these topics become core topics also in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations ?*
- *If not, should these topics be listed in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations to provide guidance to the countries about what variables should be chosen preferably in addition to the UNECE/Eurostat core topics ?*
- *Other sources can be used such as vital statistics registries for fertility and mortality*
- *Disability is new topic and there are major conceptual and data quality issues. Technical Subgroup 1-3 proposes this topic as core to encourage the collection and sharing of information. However for the same conceptual and data quality reasons Eurostat has concerns that disability be considered core for the UNECE region.*

Concerned topics that are presently non-core UNECE/Eurostat recommendations

- Ethnocultural: religion, language, ethnicity. UNSD recommends that one of these three should be asked.
- Fertility and mortality: children born alive
- Education: school attendance, literacy
- International migration: period of arrival
- Disability: disability status (discussion point: core or non-core for UNECE region?)
- Housing: sewage connection, amount of rent paid, Information and Communication Technology

Concerned topics that are presently not in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations

- Duration of residence in the locality
- Fertility and mortality: children living, children born alive in last 12 months, deaths in last 12 months
- Housing: furnished and unfurnished (discussion point: core or non-core for UNECE region?)

3.2 Topics considered *core* by UNECE/Eurostat and not by UNSD

There are a few topics that are core topics in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations, but are either derived core, non-core or not present in the UNSD recommendations. For the most part, these differences are understandable and acceptable, as explained in the detailed review of Appendix 2. The UNECE/Eurostat recommendations should provide guidance to the countries about these distinctions.

Concerned topics that are presently non-core or derived core UNSD recommendations

- Economic: time usually worked, type of place of work
- Migration: place of usual residence one year prior to the census. There is also a suggestion to replace this in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations with core topics "Year of arrival in the current place of usual residence" and "Previous place of usual residence".
- Housing: housing arrangements, number of occupants, occupancy status of conventional dwellings, kitchen, bathing facilities, type of building, period of construction.

Concerned topics that are presently not in the UNSD recommendations

- Housing: type of heating, location of living quarters. This last topic is close to the UNSD core topic "usual residence" of at least one occupant.

4. Concluding remarks

The Technical Subgroup 1.3 took particular care that there should be as much correspondence as possible between the core topics of the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations and the UNSD recommendations.

This correspondence has largely been achieved and promotes the use of a unique set of recommended tables. However, some questions remain open. These should be reconsidered during the next discussion of the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations in December 2005:

- Additional core topics of the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations should be clearly identified as such; their number should be kept limited. Some core topics might be more relevant to Europe than to other parts of the world. Moreover, there might be specific information requests that would confront limitations of data collection in some parts of the world but not in the countries that follow the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations.
- Where core topics are identified by the UNSD but not by UNECE/Eurostat, the reason for this should equally be mentioned in the metadata to the data collections that follow the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations.

Appendix 1: Proposed Core Topics for Global UN 2010 Principles and Recommendations

Geographic and internal migration characteristics

1. Place of usual residence
2. Place of birth
3. Duration of residence in the locality*

Household and family characteristics

4. Relationship to head or reference person

Demographic characteristics

5. Age or date of birth
6. Sex
7. Marital Status

Ethnocultural characteristics (UNSD proposes one of following three be asked)

8. Religion*
9. Language*
10. Ethnicity*

Fertility and mortality (also available from vital statistics registries)

11. Children born alive*
12. Children living**
13. Children born alive in last 12 months**
14. Deaths in last 12 months**

Educational characteristics

15. School attendance*
16. Educational attainment
17. Literacy*

Economic characteristics

18. Activity status
19. Occupation
20. Industry
21. Status in employment

International migration characteristics

22. Citizenship
23. Period of arrival*

Disability characteristics

24. Disability*

Housing topics

25. Living quarters
26. Rooms
27. Water supply
28. Sewage connection * and toilet facilities
29. Tenure
30. Ownership
31. Amount of rent paid*
32. Furnished and unfurnished**
33. Informatics and Communication Technology *

* Non-core UNECE/Eurostat topic

** Not a UNECE/Eurostat topic

Appendix 2: Detailed comparison of proposed UNSD and UNECE/Eurostat core Topics for the 2010 Censuses

Core topic	UN - SD	UN- ECE / Euro - Stat	page UN- ECE / Euro - stat	Comments
Geographic				
Place of usual residence	X	X	33	/
Country / place of birth	X	X	72	/
Duration of residence	X			
				<p>High priority</p> <p>In the UNSD recommendations, the core topic “Duration of residence” should be changed to “Duration of residence in the locality” to avoid confusion with the core topic “Year/period of arrival”.</p> <p>In the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations, there are currently no core topics that allow to establish when persons have arrived and where they have come from. This is a major drawback. However, there are two UNECE/Eurostat non-core topics that together would allow this: “Year of arrival in the current place of usual residence” and “Previous place of usual residence”. It should be re-considered whether these two topics should be changed into core topics. In this case, “duration of residence” could become a derived core topic in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations.</p>
Demographic				
Age / Date of birth	X	X	42	/
Sex	X	X	42	For the UNSD recommendations the variable “sex” also applies for the children and for deaths under the section “Fertility / Mortality”.
Legal marital status	X	X	42	/
Religion	X			<p>Low priority</p> <p>In the UNSD recommendations, these three ethno-cultural topics are considered as a package of core topics, where countries are asked to consider at least one as a core topic. In the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations they are considered non-core topics.</p>
Language	X			
Ethnicity	X			
Fertility / Mortality				

Children born alive	X			In the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations, the only questions specifically linked to “fertility / mortality” is the non-core topic “Total number of children born alive”. This is acceptable because most European countries have vital events statistics and do not need to estimate fertility/mortality indirectly. Consequently, no change to the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations is required. However, it might be mentioned that countries who do need to estimate fertility/mortality indirectly should comply with the four core topics of the UNSD recommendations.
Children living	X			
Children born alive during the past 12 months	X			
Deaths during the past 12 months	X			
Households				
Relationship between household members		X	92	The concept the UNECE/Eurostat recommends (household relationship matrix) is more elaborated than the concept of the relation to a reference person (UNSD approach). This poses no problem, because the UNSD’s information request concerning this topic can be served by a census done in accordance with the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations.
Relationship to head or other reference member of household	X			
Educational				
School attendance	X			<p>Low priority</p> <p>Most European countries have a legislation on school attendance as well as school statistics that report at least the enrolment (formal registration of the participants). “School attendance” is a non-core topic in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations.</p> <p>The UNSD has to take into account that many countries in the world might not have an enforced legislation and/or school statistics.</p> <p>Although the concept of “school attendance” (day to day presence at an institution of learning) differs from the concept of “enrolment”, it seems acceptable that the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations do not want countries to report obligatory on school attendance if they feel that this question adds little value to the information gathered by their school statistics.</p>
Educational attainment	X	X	66	/
Literacy	X			<p>Low priority</p> <p>Given that most European countries have legislation on schooling it seems acceptable that literacy is non-core topic in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations. However, it is known that even in highly developed countries a number of inhabitants are effectively illiterate. This might be taken into re-consideration.</p>
Economic				

Current activity status	X	X	47	/
Time usually worked		X	52	<p>Presently the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations have “time usually worked” as a core topic. The ILO recommends that this topic should be non-core. This item was included as a core item because it is useful to have information on hours usually worked in a recent short reference period in order for some users to apply alternative cut-offs on the duration of work when defining the concept of “employment”. However, there are several reasons to consider treating this item as a non-core topic, rather than a core topic. Information on time usually worked is not as important to users of census information as the other core topics listed above in assessing the structure and distribution of the economically active population. In order to measure time-related underemployment (which is also a non-core topic), it is preferable to measure time actually worked during the reference period rather than time usually worked. Finally, it is difficult to accurately measure time worked in a population census. Consequently, in the interests of reducing the number of core topics, the ILO recommends that this topic should be ranked as a non-core topic.</p>
Occupation	X	X	52	/
Industry (economic branch of activity)	X	X	53	/
Status in employment	X	X	54	/
Type of place of work		X	56	<p>It seems acceptable that “Type of place of work” is a core topic in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations but not the UNSD recommendations because the subject might not have the high relevance in all parts of the world that is has in Europe; in some countries it might be quite difficult to effectively collect this information. The ILO adds that it would also be highly relevant in other parts of the world when analyzing conditions of work, especially when combined with variables that identify the informal sector. However, a population census is not the appropriate method to do so. The ILO is open to making this non-core for the UNECE region as well.</p>
Location of place of work		X	40	<p>It seems acceptable that “Location of place of work” is a core topic in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations but not the UNSD recommendations because the subject might not have the high relevance in all parts of the world that is has in Europe; in some countries it might be quite difficult to effectively collect this information.</p> <p>Moreover, the topic might lead to very extensive cross tabulations that are hard to handle other than with IT tools that are not prevalent everywhere.</p>

International migration				
Country of citizenship	X	X	73	/
Place of usual residence one year prior to the census		X	73	<p>High priority</p> <p>In the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations, there are currently no core topics that allow to establish when persons have arrived and where they have come from. This is a major drawback. The core topic “Place of usual residence one year prior to the census” is intended to remedy, since it would allow to study patterns of recent migration. However with information on only this topic available, it would be impossible to study the medium and long-term mobility of the population (internal and international).</p> <p>For this reason, Eurostat and ILO feel that a more precise and comprehensive approach might be reconsidered, namely to change "Year of arrival in the current place of usual residence" and "Previous place of usual residence" into core topics in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations.</p>
Year/period of arrival	X			<p>High priority</p> <p>In the UNSD recommendations, the core topic “Year/period of arrival” should be changed to “Year/period of arrival in the country” to avoid confusion with the core topic “Duration of residence in the locality”.</p> <p>In the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations, there are currently no core topics that allow to establish when persons have arrived and where they have come from. There are two non-core topics that together would allow this: “Year of arrival in the current place of usual residence” and “Previous place of usual residence”. It should be re-considered whether these two topics should be changed into core topics. In this case, “Year/period of arrival in the country” could become a derived core topic in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations.</p>
Disabilities				
Disability status	X			<p>Low priority</p> <p>In the UNSD recommendations, “disability status” is considered a core topic, in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations it is considered a non-core topic. A precise and operational definition of “being disabled” shall be developed.</p>
Housing				
Tenure status of households	X	X	102	/
Type of living	X	X	111	/

quarters				
Number of rooms	X	X	114	/
Water supply	X	X	117	/
Toilet facilities	X	X	118	/
Type of ownership of conventional main dwellings	X	X	114	/
Location of living quarters		X	112	<p>It seems acceptable that “Location of living quarter” is a core topic in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations but not the UNSD recommendations because the subject might not have the high relevance in all parts of the world that is has in Europe; in some countries it might be quite difficult to effectively collect this information.</p> <p>Moreover, the topic might lead to very extensive cross tabulations that are hard to handle other than with IT tools that are not prevalent everywhere.</p> <p>The unit of enumeration of the UNECE/Eurostat core topic “Location of living quarters” is the living quarter, not the occupant (i.e. his/her place of usual residence).</p>
Housing arrangements	(X)	X	112	<p>The core topic “housing arrangement”, if compared to the core topic “Type of living quarters”, includes “occupants living in non-conventional dwellings” and the roofless. The wide definition of the UNSD core topic “Type of living quarters/housing units” arguably includes the “occupants living in non-conventional dwellings”. UNSD table H.1 requires and estimate of the number of “homeless”. It therefore seems acceptable that “Housing arrangements” is not explicitly listed as core topic in the UNSD recommendations.</p>
Number of occupants in conventional dwellings		X	112	<p>Given the different approach (see below), the UNECE/Eurostat core topic “number of occupants” (direct enumeration) is a derived core topic in the context of the UNSD recommendations (indirect enumeration).</p>
Occupancy status of conventional dwellings		X	113	<p>Middle priority</p> <p>The UNECE/Eurostat core topic “Occupancy status of conventional dwellings” includes various kinds of dwellings about which the occupants could not report.</p>
Kitchen		X	117	<p>In the UNSD recommendations, “type of cooking facilities” is a non-core topic. The less ambitious definition as well as the fact of being a non-core variable seems acceptable because the subject might not have the high relevance in all parts of the world that is has in Europe; in some countries it might be quite difficult to effectively collect this information.</p>

Bathing facilities		X	118	In the UNSD recommendations, “bathing facilities” is a non-core topic. The fact of being a non-core variable seems acceptable because the subject might not have the high relevance in all parts of the world that is has in Europe; in some countries it might be quite difficult to effectively collect this information.
Type of heating		X	119	Middle priority “Type of heating” is not a topic in the UNSD recommendations which seems acceptable because the subject might not have the high relevance in all parts of the world that is has in Europe; in some countries it might be quite difficult to effectively collect this information. The occupants might not report reliably on the UNECE/Eurostat core topic “Type of heating”, notably on the distinction within central heating.
Type of building		X	123	Middle priority The UNECE/Eurostat core topic “Type of building” includes various kinds of buildings about which the occupants could not report.
Period of construction		X	123	Middle priority The occupants might not report reliably on the UNECE/Eurostat core topic “Period of construction”.
Sewage connection	X			Low priority In the UNSD recommendations, “sewage connection” is considered a core topic, in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations it is considered a non-core topic. Given that it might have some importance in rural or less developed regions as well as its impact on the natural environment, it could be reconsidered if “sewage connection” should not be combined with the UNECE/Eurostat core topic “toilet facilities”.
Rent paid	X			Low priority In the UNSD recommendations, the amount of “rent paid” is considered a core topic, in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations it is considered a non-core topic. The unit of enumeration of the UNSD core -topic “rent paid” is the occupants, not the living quarter or the building.
Furnished / unfurnished	X			Low priority In the UNSD recommendations, “Furnished / unfurnished” is considered a core topic, in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations it is not a topic at all. Given that it is a core topic of the UNSD recommendations, it should be reconsidered if it should not become a non-core topic in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations. In this case, a

				sufficiently clear definition should be developed.
Information and Communication Technologies	X			<p>Low priority</p> <p>In the UNSD recommendations, “ICT” is considered a core topic, in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations “telephone and internet connection” this is a non-core topic.</p> <p>The unit of enumeration of the UNSD core-topic “telephone and internet connection” is the occupants, not the living quarter or the building.</p>

Appendix 3: Discussion of priorities among differences between proposed UNSD and UNECE/Eurostat core topics for the 2010 Censuses

3.1 Priority: High

In the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations, there are currently no core topics that allow to establish when persons have arrived in the place of their current usual residence and where they have come from. This is a major drawback. *It should be taken into account that a number of tables within the set of the UNSD recommended tables cannot be filled in without this information available, namely those concerned with the duration of residence in the locality (internal + international mobility) and the period of arrival in the country (international mobility). Information on internal and international mobility of the population is of general and increasing interest.*

However, there are two UNECE/Eurostat non-core topics that together would allow this: “**Year of arrival in the current place of usual residence**” and “**Previous place of usual residence**”. *It should be re-considered whether these two non-core topics should be changed into core topics.*

In this context, *it should be re-considered if “Place of usual residence one year prior to the census” should remain a core topic in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations.*

[0]The ILO adds that explicit wording is needed to ensure correct measurement of concepts. While it logical to think that "year of first arrival" and "previous place of residence" could be used to determine the number of migrants one-year ago, in practice, "year of entry" and "previous residence X years ago" questions are not always measuring the same thing when it comes to **international** migration. Part of this is because when most year of entry questions are asked, for cyclical movers (that is a person who moves back-and-forth between two countries several times, which is often the case for more recent migrants), it is unclear whether the respondent should be giving the "MOST RECENT" or "FIRST" year of arrival. If the person gives the "first" year of arrival, then it will not necessarily correspond to where they were living one year ago. In the case of the 2000 US Census, when you compared results of Year of Entry 1995 or later, to residence 5 year ago, there were huge differences between the two questions. However, for internal migration it works better, for when one compared "Year moved into current home" and the "residence 5 years ago question," they matched pretty well. If the question explicitly stated what is meant by "year of arrival" then this method could work.

Presently the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations have **time usually worked** as a core topic. The ILO recommends that this topic should be non-core. This item was included as a core item because it is useful to have information on hours usually worked in a recent short reference period in order for some users to apply alternative cut-offs on the duration of work when defining the concept of “employment”. However, there are several reasons to consider treating this item as a non-core topic, rather than a core topic. Information on time usually worked is not as important to users of census information as the other core topics listed above in assessing the structure and distribution of the economically active population. In order to measure time-related underemployment (which is also a non-core topic), it is preferable to measure time actually worked during the reference period rather than time usually worked. Finally, it is difficult to accurately measure time worked in a population census. Consequently, in the interests of reducing the number of core topics, the ILO recommends that this topic should be ranked as a “non-core topic”.

3.2 Priority: Middle

For housing, there is a substantial discrepancy between the core topics as defined by the recommendations of the UNSD and the UNECE/Eurostat. The technical subgroup 1.3 discussed these and concluded that many of the discrepancies were the result of the use of different concepts.

The UNSD states in its “Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses” that there are three units of enumeration for housing censuses: buildings, living quarters and occupants. It clarifies: “The principal unit of enumeration in a housing census are sets of living quarters (...) that will provide a meaningful description of the **housing situation** (...)” (2.290). “The building is regarded as an *indirect* but important unit of enumeration for housing censuses (...). In a housing census, the questions on building characteristics are normally *framed in terms of the building in which the living quarters enumerated are located*, and the information is recorded for each of the housing units or other living quarters located within it.” (1.334).

Although the present draft of the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations seems to follow the same principle, the focus there is much more shifted towards the **building stock** in a country. Whereas the unit of enumeration “living quarter” is closely seen to be linked to occupants (conventional main residence + other housing unit + collective living quarters), the concept of “conventional dwelling” is much closer to the building and includes dwellings that are unoccupied during the time of the census (conventional main residence + seasonal and secondary dwellings + vacant dwellings). This approach is a condition for some UNECE core variables, and is equally reflected in many non-core variables.

If all core topics are to be enumerated, this can have consequences for the data collection. For some core topics reliable information cannot be collected by asking the occupant. It has to be collected via building registers, by asking the owner of the building or via enumerators. This might reduce the capacity to cross tabulate these variables.

There should be a reconsideration how to treat this problem:

- *Is the inclusion of the respective core topics feasible in all countries ?*
- *To which extent can the respective variables be cross tabulated ?*

On the other hand, the UNSD recommendations include some core topics under “housing” that have the occupants as unit of enumeration, not the living quarter or the building. These are not core topics in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations.

Concerned topics

- Occupancy status of conventional dwellings
- Type of building
- Type of heating
- Period of construction

3.3 Priority: Low

There are a number of topics that are core topics in the UNSD recommendations, but not in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations.

There should be a reconsideration how to treat this problem:

- *Should these topics become core topics also in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations ?*

- *If not, should these topics be listed in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations to provide guidance to the countries about what variables should be chosen preferably in addition to the UNECE/Eurostat core topics ?*

Concerned topics

- Sewage connection
- Amount of rent paid
- Information and Communication Technology
- Ethno-cultural topics (Religion, Ethnicity, Language)
- Disability status
- School attendance
- Literacy
- Furnished / unfurnished (new UNECE/Eurostat *non-core* topic ?)

“Disability” may be a non-core topic for censuses in Europe because all European countries compile statistics on disability from sources other– more specialised – sources than pop censuses (see ILO Integration working paper No. 40). On the other hand the ILO Paper shows that 30% of the reporting countries employ population censuses to gather information on disability. In developing countries this is very often the only available source. The conclusion is that disability does not need to become a core topic in the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations, but must remain a core topic considered by UNSD.
