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DIFFICULT-TO-MEASURE TOPICS

Organizing censuses of difficult-to-count population groups

Submitted by the Federal State Statistical Service of the Russian Federation

SUMMARY

This document was prepared at the request of the Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses for presentation and discussion at the Joint UNECE/Eurostat Meeting on Population and Housing Censuses, to be held in Geneva from 13 to 15 May 2008. The document will serve as a basis for the discussion at the meeting on the item "Difficult-to-measure topics".

1. In preparing for a population census, one of the first methodological decisions to be made is to define the categories of population for enumeration.

2. Article 4 of the Federal Act on the All-Russian Population Census provides that:

“1. The following shall be subject to the All-Russian Population Census:

- (i) Citizens of the Russian Federation, foreign citizens and stateless persons who are in the territory of the Russian Federation on the date of the All-Russian Population Census, with the exception of the foreign citizens indicated in paragraph 2 of this article;
- (ii) Citizens of the Russian Federation who reside permanently in the Russian Federation but are outside the Russian Federation on the date of the All-Russian Population Census.

2. Foreign citizens enjoying immunity and privileges in accordance with international agreements concluded by the Russian Federation shall not be subject to the All-Russian Population Census.”

2.* To ensure a complete enumeration of the population, the statistical authorities draw up a detailed list of population groups and enumeration methods in order to avoid the omission of any group of people. Attention may be drawn to a number of population groups whose enumeration presents organizational difficulties.

3. The principle behind the All-Russian Population Census is to obtain information from respondents without requiring documents confirming the truth of their replies or certifying the lawfulness of their presence in the Russian Federation.

4. The greatest difficulties for census enumeration are presented by:

- (a) Immigrants not in possession of a permit to enter the country;
- (b) Immigrants in possession of a permit to enter the country but not registered;
- (c) Persons with no fixed abode (homeless persons and vagrants).

5. These categories of person may be considered together, in that the census methodology used is practically identical: they are enumerated wherever they happen to be on the date of the census.

6. The Russian Federation permits entry to Russian territory without a visa for most of the member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). On arrival, residents of

* *Translator's note.* The numbering of paragraphs follows the original text.

those countries are required to register immediately with the Federal Migration Service. Not all persons in this category comply with these requirements, however, and they thus enter the category of illegal migrants. Their principal reason for coming to Russia is to seek work.

7. In order to ensure that such persons were included in the 2002 All-Russian Population Census, the State Statistical Service reached agreement with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, at that time responsible for passport and visa matters, which later passed to the Federal Migration Service, on the provision of assistance in enumerating such persons. The Ministry signed a schedule of measures under which it would not only provide information to the statistical authorities on places where such persons gathered or resided but also implement a number of other measures, such as ensuring the safety of census personnel, protecting regional census offices and assisting with the transportation of census forms to regional offices located in “difficult” areas.

8. The district police - that is, the police responsible for order within a particular district - were well aware of the places where such groups were to be found in the territories under their protection. Generally speaking, these were markets, hostels, building sites or old dwelling houses. The district inspectors of the Ministry of Internal Affairs passed this information on to the statistical authorities and gave warning of places where the residents might engage in inappropriate behaviour or where it would be dangerous for census personnel to go on their own, without police protection. Census personnel went to such addresses only when accompanied by a district police officer.

9. The statistical authorities first used a trial census in 2000 to devise and implement measures to organize the enumeration of illegal migrants. In choosing a location to conduct the trial census, the authorities deliberately settled on a district of Moscow that was home to one of the country’s largest flea markets. Census stations were set up within the market and announcements were made on the radio that a census was being conducted for persons not having a permanent residence or unwilling or unable to register at their place of residence. On the first day, people came up to the census personnel simply to find out what a census was and then, greatly daring, a number decided to submit themselves to the census. After the first people had registered and received a special document certifying their participation in the census, and nothing had happened to them (the people involved were mostly illegal migrants and they were afraid they would be deported from the country), people queued up to be registered and this enabled the census personnel to conduct their work.

10. The experience gained from the trial census was successfully applied to the 2002 All-Russian Population Census. Such census stations were set up at railway stations, markets and other places where people gather throughout the Russian Federation. It was agreed with the authorities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs that, during the census, persons presenting proof of participation in the census would not be detained in the course of document checks.

11. Persons with no fixed abode (vagrants), who generally live in attics, cellars, sewers or rubbish dumps, were also mostly enumerated with the assistance of the Ministry of Internal Affairs authorities, like illegal migrants. Departments of the Ministry in various parts of the country introduced preventive health and hygiene measures for vagrants to coincide with the census (they were washed, their clothes were disinfected and they were given medical assistance

and food) and, at the same time, census forms were filled out for them and they were given documents certifying their participation in the census. In some cases, it was the only document they possessed.

12. Attention should be drawn to the positive experience of setting up census stations for census staff to carry out their work. Such stations were located in places where people gather, such as railway stations, airports, markets or hotels, and at every regional census office. It was announced that people could be registered at a census station and, over the first days, a large number came. Basically, these were people living within the census area concerned, who left home early and returned late, or who did not want to let a census worker enter their house, or who lived in accommodation belonging to private persons without a rental agreement and the owners did not wish these people to be registered as living in their apartments. Homeless people also presented themselves.

13. Many difficulties arose in enumerating wealthy persons living in houses surrounded by fences and having their own security personnel. Such premises were identified beforehand, during the preparations for the census, and contacts were made with the households' protection or domestic staff to establish how the census could be organized. An important role was played by the fact that the televised information campaign conducted during the census included features showing the nation's leaders participating in the census, and similar stories were filmed by television companies in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation involving their leaders.

14. Census-taking in remote districts. The existence of such areas as the Far North and similar regions, the mountainous regions of the Northern Caucasus and Eastern and Western Siberia, and other districts with difficult climatic conditions and remote locations, entails some departures from the general rules in planning and executing a census in such areas: either the census is carried out earlier than elsewhere, or no preliminary monitoring or reconnaissance is done, or more time is made available and, in some cases, the census is conducted by telephone or radio.

15. During the run-up period, the census authorities in the various regions work with the local authorities in drawing up a list of remote areas. This involves:

(a) Tracking changes that have occurred since the previous census, such as whether any weather stations have been opened or closed down, whether any geological exploration is taking place, whether there are any new mines or lighthouses, whether old ones have closed down, or whether population centres have been lost as a result of the termination of fossil fuel mining, and identifying changes in the location of reindeer herders' camping grounds or pasturing in mountain areas and the growth of new population centres in remote locations;

(b) Determining the optimum timescale and the most economical methods for conducting the census, such as using radio or telephone communications, conducting the census to coincide with the reindeer herders' celebrations, which are attended by the nomadic community as a whole, and taking advantage of any available opportunity to transport census staff, such as food, fuel or postal deliveries.

16. Such a list relating to the 2002 All-Russian Population Census was approved by a decision of the Government of the Russian Federation.

17. The enumeration of crew members of Russian commercial and passenger ships who, on the date of the census, are away on long voyages is organized as follows:

(a) Crew members living in households are registered during the general census at the address at which their household regularly resides. The census form is filled out with information given by members of the household and a note is made of the crew member's temporary absence;

(b) Lone crew members who are registered with their vessel or the organization for which they work are enumerated before the voyage starts, at the location of the vessel or the organization.

18. The measures taken to organize the census of the most difficult-to-count categories of the population, principally illegal migrants, achieved the expected result. The population numbers obtained as a result of the census exceeded the running estimate by 1,867,000, or 1.3 per cent. Experts believe that migrants fell precisely into the category of people who for one reason or another were not included in the statistical running total.

19. Work is currently in hand for the 2010 All-Russian Population Census. A trial census will be held in October 2008 covering approximately 300,000 people. A decision has been reached on the districts that are to be included in the trial census, which are located as follows:

(a) The central district of Khabarovsk in Khabarovsk territory (Far East, border territory);

(b) The Petrograd district of St. Petersburg (North-west, second largest urban population in the Russian Federation);

(c) Balashikha and 12 rural settlements in Moscow province (central area, town adjoining Moscow).

20. The locations chosen are all "difficult" from the point of view of conducting a census, in that the people involved are inhabitants of metropolises, illegal migrants, persons with no fixed abode, high-income groups. This will make it possible to test once again ways and means of organizing the enumeration of difficult-to-count categories of population.
