



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
29 February 2012

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses

Fourteenth Meeting

Geneva, 24-25 May 2012

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda and election of officers

Annotated provisional agenda

To be held in room XI at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, starting at 9:30 am on Thursday, 24 May 2012.

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda and election of officers
2. Full enumeration versus sample surveys
3. Access to microdata
4. Address/dwelling listing
5. Internet data collection
6. Adoption of the report

II. Annotations

The meeting is organised jointly with Eurostat following the provisions of the UNECE Statistical Programme for 2012, approved by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians and the UNECE Executive Committee.

1. Adoption of the agenda and election of officers

The UNECE in cooperation with Eurostat organize regularly sessions for the Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses. The main purpose of the sessions is to facilitate the exchange of experiences among countries and increase knowledge on various issues related to the planning and conduction of the population and housing censuses of the 2010 round. This results in increased capacity by countries to plan and conduct the

population and housing censuses in compliance with the “CES Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing”. The proposed provisional agenda is agreed upon by the members of the UNECE-Eurostat Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses. The provisional agenda will be presented for the approval by the participants of the session.

2. Full enumeration versus sample surveys

When a country starts considering options to the traditional methodology for a population census, one of the first alternatives on the table is the use of sample surveys. This is indeed an alternative for which expertise is normally available within the Statistical Offices and may not require interactions with external authorities, as in the case of use of registers. At the same time, it may pave the way to lightening the "census backbone" in favour of (multi)annual survey updates, in case of future major revisions to the census exercise. However, it poses a number of methodological and technological challenges, not least the compliance with the essential features of a population census. The session will gather contributions from countries which have undertaken this methodological move and will share the lessons learnt, with first views about consequences/plans for the next round.

3. Access to microdata

The census information needs of policy analysts and decision makers increasingly require access to microdata records to facilitate analyses. This presents special challenges in order to continue to respect requirements for confidentiality of census data. Public use microdata files, custom coding, custom retrieval services, secure data laboratories and remote access are some of the means developed to address these needs. In this session countries are expected to exchange experiences and current plans for enabling access to census microdata. This may include sampling records, procedures for ensuring confidentiality of the microdata, use of metadata, the role of the Internet, remote access practices and international cross-border access.

4. Address/dwelling listing

Address or dwelling listing operations are commonly conducted by enumerators prior to a traditional census or as questionnaires are dropped off at dwellings. For countries that mail out census questionnaires, the listing exercise is key to producing complete and reliable lists of postal addresses. High quality dwelling listings are also important to minimize both under-coverage and over-coverage of dwellings which has a direct influence on the quality of population counts and an indirect impact on the quality of all other data produced by the census. In this session countries are expected to exchange experiences from their recent census on listing activities. This may include the role of dwelling listings in the overall census collection design, measures to ensure the quality of the work of enumerators, quality control procedures to be applied as the dwelling listing is completed, and emerging technology in this field.

5. Internet data collection

In the current census round a significant number of countries that conducted a census with field data collection offered - in many cases for the first time - the option of completing the forms on the internet. The internet census may bring advantages in terms of coverage (particularly for areas and population groups with high non-response), data quality, and image of the statistical office. If the take up rate is significantly high, then cost savings could also be obtained in terms of form printing, field work, and data processing, at least in the long term. However, introducing the internet option requires significant changes in the

census organization - due to multiple mode data collection - and important technological and financial investments. Moreover, there are potential risks that could affect seriously the success of the census, for instance if security breaches in the internet information systems lead to disclosure of confidential census information. In this session, countries that offered the internet census option will share their experiences with regard to technological aspects, take-up rates and response of the public, data quality and other issues.
