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SEMINAR ON POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUSES

**Experience in conducting the 1999 population census and
preparing for the 2009 census***

**Submitted by the Statistical Agency of the
Republic of Kazakhstan**

1. After gaining their independence, the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) conducted their first national censuses within the framework of the 2000 census cycle in accordance with United Nations recommendations. One of the pioneers in the census process in the former Soviet Republics was Kazakhstan, where the first independent national population census was successfully conducted from 25 February to 4 March 1999.
2. The 1999 census was organized and held in conditions that in every way differed from censuses conducted in the Soviet period. The programme took account of major changes in Kazakhstan's socio-economic development and the structure of Kazakh society, while at the same time preserving the necessary continuity in order to ensure that the materials of the next census are comparable with the results of previous censuses; in this exercise, indicators were brought as close as possible to international counterparts. The compatibility of these main areas served as the guiding principle in conducting the 1999 census.

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3. The census programme was agreed and approved by academics and specialists from diverse Kazakh organizations, who bore in mind the recommendations of the United Nations and other international organizations. The programme contained 23 questions: 18 questions of a demographic and socio-economic nature and 5 questions about housing conditions.

4. One important innovation was the choice of the household as the observation unit. The transition to household accounting did not make it more difficult to obtain extensive information about families.

5. An important difference was the inclusion in the census programme of such questions as a person's work status (employer, hired labourer or unemployed, presence or absence of work) and a reformulation of questions about sources of livelihood.

6. One difference from previous censuses was the inclusion of such questions as the level of fluency in the State language (Kazakh), citizenship, new indicators of migration processes that trace population movements over the past 10 years, and the number of persons living together in detached dwellings. For the first time, census results were processed using the method of scanning information from questionnaires with a special scanning machine. The technology for processing census materials included the most up-to-date German counting scanners. At the time, virtually none of the CIS countries had similar experience. The five sectional computer centres attached to statistical offices in Aqtobe (Aktyubinsk), East Kazakhstan, Qaraghandy (Karaganda) and South Kazakhstan provinces and to the Statistical Agency itself were equipped with local computer networks and servers, including scanners for the optical reading and processing of information from questionnaires from several regions of Kazakhstan.

I. LEGISLATIVE BASIS FOR THE 1999 POPULATION CENSUS

7. Pursuant to the decision of the Council of Heads of Statistical Services of CIS Member States of 30 March 1995 and the decision of the Board of the Inter-State Economic Committee of the CIS Economic Union of 16 October 1995, in the context of the United Nations recommendations for the 2000 censuses of population, it was considered advisable to make proposals, in accordance with established procedure, to the Governments of the independent countries concerning the conduct of forthcoming population censuses in the countries of the Commonwealth at the beginning of 1999. The Government of Kazakhstan created all the legal prerequisites for conducting the first national population census in Kazakhstan's recent history, from 25 February to 4 March 1999. Accordingly, Government Decision No. 389 of 3 April 1995 and Government Decision No. 1519 of 11 December 1996 were adopted.

8. In accordance with the aforementioned regulatory acts:

(a) It was decided that the Statistical Agency and its regional offices would be responsible for the preparation and conduct of the census and for the processing, analytical summary and publication of census results;

(b) A time frame for all preparatory work for the census was established;

(c) Central and local government bodies were assigned specific tasks;

(d) The Republican Census Commission, composed of heads of ministries and departments, was created;

(e) A time frame for the census and the main organizational provisions for conducting the census were established;

(f) The mechanism for selecting and approving temporary census staff and the procedure for recruiting and remunerating staff for census work were established.

II. PREPARATIONS FOR THE 1999 POPULATION CENSUS

9. Together with State statistical offices, central government bodies, most of which mobilized their territorial subdivisions for the exercise, participated, within the scope of their competence, in the preparations and conduct of the census.

10. With a view to coordinating and making effective use of the bodies involved in preparing for and conducting the census, Kazakhstan established the Republican Census Commission, which was chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. The Commission was composed of heads of ministries and departments. Similar commissions were created and operated in all regions of Kazakhstan.

11. In accordance with the Government-established time frame, a series of priority preparatory activities for the census were carried out.

12. In keeping with the timetable, methodological and organizational guidelines for conducting the census were developed; they were approved in 1997 during the conduct of a test census in Saryagash district of South Kazakhstan province. The results of the test census were used to make adjustments to the programme and organizational and methodological guidelines for conducting the 1999 census.

13. In 1997 and 1998, work was conducted to revise and compile new lists and establish the boundaries of districts, *aul* (village) areas and settlement administrations. Addresses, street names, numbering of blocks, houses and flats, side streets, squares and so forth in localities were regularized.

14. At the same time, on instructions from local government bodies, the Land Resources Management Agency and other State bodies prepared (developed) the required quantity of cartographic materials: diagrammatic maps of districts and localities (towns, settlements and *auls* (villages)).

15. During the same period, verification of the accuracy and completeness of the current register of Kazakhstan's urban and rural population was completed.

16. Measures to revise the boundaries of urban settlements, verify street names and number houses and flats, and prepare cartographic materials served as the basis for compiling lists of residential buildings in urban settlements and large rural settlements with a population of 5,000 and above, and lists of rural communities.

17. In 1998, temporary register clerks were recruited to compile lists of residential buildings. The average quota for each register clerk was 45 buildings a day.

18. Lists of village communities, including the simultaneous revision of population figures, were compiled by the secretaries of *aul*/village and settlement administrations in Kazakhstan's rural areas.

19. On the basis of the lists of buildings in urban settlements and large rural settlements, and the lists of rural communities, in keeping with the timetable, regional statistical offices compiled organizational plans for conducting the census, with the active participation of territorial census commissions. The end result of such work was the division of the country's territory into census districts and instructor and counting stations.

20. The number of census staff required - 88,200 - was determined on the basis of the organizational plans for the census that were approved by local government bodies; the territory of Kazakhstan was divided into 1,463 census districts, 11,706 instructor stations and 55,591 counting stations. The number of census staff needed to conduct the population census on premises with a changing population (hotels, hospitals, railway stations, airports, bus stations and long-distance trains) was also determined.

21. In 1998, the tools for conducting the census received final approval, and the relevant materials were printed and delivered to local statistical offices. Measures were taken to ensure logistical and financial support for the census. In particular, tenders were made and the necessary stationery supplies and office equipment, census portfolios, racks for storing census documents and other equipment were purchased.

22. Temporary census staff were selected and trained before the start of the census. Training was held in specially organized sessions and included practical exercises and tests of knowledge.

23. Staff was recruited from among employees of State institutions, teachers and students at higher and secondary special educational establishments, and also unemployed persons registered with employment agencies.

24. The deputy heads of district (municipal) statistical offices involved in the census were recruited for three and a half months, directors of census offices and their assistants were recruited for 58 working days, instructors in urban settlements for 29 working days, instructors in rural areas for 31 working days, and census takers for 21 working days.

25. Practically all the subdivisions responsible for preparing and conducting the population census and for receiving, processing and storing census materials were provided with all the necessary premises, means of communication, furniture and equipment and motor transport.

26. Public awareness campaigns conducted by State statistical offices together with other participants in the census work (Ministry of Culture, Information and Sport, the Kazakh Information Agency (Kazinform), television and radio companies and other mass media) made a considerable contribution to popularizing the census.

III. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE POPULATION (FIELDWORK)

27. In keeping with the timetable, before the official census began, an early census was conducted in remote districts and localities and in transhumance areas that would have been extremely hard to reach by road transport or by communications during the general census. The data obtained during the early census were combined with the general census data.
28. From 19 to 24 February 1999, the census takers conducted a preliminary survey of premises (including non-residential premises) where the population could live. The aim of the preliminary survey was primarily to familiarize the census takers with the boundaries of their districts and to explain to respondents residing in their territories the procedure for conducting the survey and to determine the most convenient time for visiting them.
29. The census takers began their survey of the population at 8 a.m. on 25 February 1999. They registered all persons, including temporary residents, who at midnight on the night of 24/25 December 1998 (the so-called "critical moment") were physically present on each of the premises surveyed. Consequently, members of the population who died before or were born after the critical moment were not registered; as a result, a sort of "snapshot" of the whole population was obtained.
30. The census takers registered all citizens of Kazakhstan and foreign citizens and stateless persons who were in the territory of Kazakhstan on the date of the census, as well as citizens of Kazakhstan who are permanent residents of Kazakhstan but who were temporarily out of the country at the time of the census. The population was registered at its permanent (usual) place of residence, which could be a locality, house, flat or room where the respondent spent most of his or her time. The survey was conducted without their provision of documentary evidence.
31. On average, the actual workload for each census taker during the census was 350 persons (the work plan estimated 348 persons) in urban settlements and 300 (299 in the work plan) in rural areas.
32. In all, 88,253 census staff, including census staff who surveyed premises with a changing population (including reserves, hotels, hospitals, sanatoriums, trains and so forth). Of that number, 209 were deputy heads of district (municipal) statistical divisions; 3,410 were directors of census offices and their assistants; 14,566 were instructors; and 70,068 were census takers.
33. Following the survey of the population, 5 to 10 March 1999 the instructors, together with the census takers, conducted checks to ascertain whether or not any persons had been omitted or erroneously registered by a census taker. To this end, and in order to ensure that some members of the population were not counted twice, control forms and information about the conduct of the census were used.

34. The results of the work carried out during the entire period of the population survey and the conduct of checks were analysed and summarized every day. The progress of the census was monitored using the daily information that the central office of the Statistical Agency received from provincial (municipal) statistical offices. Censuses were also conducted by the Ministry of Defence and Internal Affairs at their closed facilities, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs among citizens of Kazakhstan living abroad, and by the Ministry of Transport and Communications in trains and at airports, railway stations and bus terminals.

IV. RECEIPT AND PROCESSING OF 1999 POPULATION CENSUS MATERIALS

35. Census materials completed by the census takers were verified at instructor stations and census offices, where control forms were also sorted out and verified. Like the information about the conduct of the census, the control forms were used to ensure the completeness and quality of census data and to prevent possible omissions and double counts in census documentation, after which the census materials were transmitted to district (municipal) statistical divisions.

36. After an additional check, the district (municipal) statistical divisions sent the assembled census documentation to statistical offices in provinces (cities), where they were coded. After coding, these data were sent to sectional centres for processing.

37. Next, the databases created by the sectional centres were transmitted to the Statistical Agency's information and computer centre in order to create a centralized database, produce tally sheets and manage the census database.

V. PUBLICATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE 1999 POPULATION CENSUS

38. The results of the census are of considerable interest to the public, both from an intellectual and practical standpoint. The first preliminary results of the census were made public in May 1999 at a press conference for the mass media, researchers and academics, specialists from ministries and departments, representatives of international organizations, and so forth.

39. The 1999 census materials were issued in three phases.

40. In the first phase, in 1999 the preliminary results of the population census, disaggregated by sex and place of residence, were made public, and the handbook "Preliminary results of the 1999 population census in the Republic of Kazakhstan" and the compendium "Brief description of the results of the 1999 population census in the Republic of Kazakhstan" were issued.

41. In the second phase, in 2000 thematic compendiums and handbooks dealing with 13 topics were issued. The handbooks and compendiums contained population data based on sociodemographic and economic indicators, such as size and distribution of the population, level of education, migration, ethnic composition and knowledge of languages, sources of livelihood and employment, and number and size of households.

42. In the third phase, in 2001 15 thematic compendiums and handbooks, 48 regional compendiums and handbooks and 10 handbooks in the State language were prepared and published.

43. The thematic compendiums and handbooks contained a great deal of information describing the population by sex and age, marital status, level of education, place of birth and citizenship, employment and living conditions, as well as data about women, young people, the unemployed population and persons temporarily residing in Kazakhstan.

44. Various (about 80) analytical materials (reports, press releases, articles and so forth) were specially prepared for the mass media and the general public; many of those materials were published in the periodic press. Computer users were able to obtain all the information on the population census on a special page on the Agency's website and on the Internet.

VI. PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2009 CENSUS

45. In 2006, Kazakhstan began preparations for the next population and housing census, which is to be held in 2009. The census will become an integral part of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, which the United Nations has planned for the period 2005-2014.

46. Within the framework of the Programme, Kazakhstan has developed guidelines for conducting the next population census. The guidelines were approved at a meeting of the Government of Kazakhstan (Minutes No. 19 of 20 December 2005).

47. Preparatory, organizational and methodological work will begin with the adoption in 2006 of regulatory acts concerning the preparation and conduct of the census. The acts will approve the procedure and dates for, and the persons to be involved in, preparing and conducting the census.

48. With the adoption of the regulatory acts, local government bodies and individual ministries and departments and their local branches will be given major and important tasks in the preparation and conduct of the census. The Government of Kazakhstan will approve the Republican Census Commission, whose status and powers will enable it to solve problems effectively, monitor the preparations for and conduct of the census, provide practical assistance in their solution and approve the basic methodological guidelines for the census. Similar commissions will be approved for the country's regions.

49. In the organization and conduct of the next census, the main concern is to ensure the correct and scientifically based elaboration of the census programme, preparations for which will begin in 2007 with a revision of the methodology for conducting the census and the formulation of the questions to be included in the questionnaires. The census programme will preserve the necessary continuity in order to ensure that the results of previous censuses are comparable with the results of the 2009 census.

50. At present, experts and demographers of Kazakhstan are considering a draft model questionnaire for the 2010 round of censuses to be held in the Commonwealth of Independent States, which was submitted by the CIS Inter-State Statistical Committee. The questionnaire

contains systematized basic thematic sets of questions: geographical characteristics and migration characteristics; characteristics of households and families; demographic and social characteristics; birth rate; education; and economic characteristics.

51. After a wide-ranging discussion of the draft model questionnaire and the submission of proposals and comments on the draft, and bearing in mind national particularities, the questionnaire will be approved for use in the conduct of pilot (test) projects in a number of regions of Kazakhstan.

52. The pilot census is planned for 2008. It will be a “dress rehearsal”, and only once it has been conducted will it be possible to determine the costs and sources of financing of the census, and to take measures to reduce expenses. The approval of a methodology and the relevant means of implementing it, and the trial run of the questions in order to determine whether or not they can be understood by the general public, will make it possible to finalize approval of the instruments for conducting the main census in 2009. Unlike previous censuses, the pilot censuses will be conducted in three of the country’s districts, each with different natural and economic conditions. The results of the pilot census will make it possible to select the variant that ensures maximum completeness and quality of census documentation, with an optimum time frame for conducting the survey, a realistic estimate of staff needed and a standard workload for census takers.

53. In 2008, measures will be taken to ensure that census covers the whole population of Kazakhstan and that the quality of the results is high: boundaries of administrative divisions will be established and target households in populated areas will be systematized; cartographic materials will be prepared and revised, and lists of houses will be compiled.

54. In order to ensure the population’s positive attitude towards the census, during the preparations for and conduct of the census all inhabitants of Kazakhstan will be kept informed about census activities.

55. In 2008 and 2009, temporary census staff will be selected and approved; they will be trained at special sessions that will include practical exercises and tests of their knowledge.

56. Within the established time frame, the 2009 census will be conducted by trained census staff that have been personally approved by the *akims* (heads) of districts and towns. The time frame for conducting the census will be extended: if in 1999 only one week was allocated for the survey of the population, in 2009 it will be possible to allocate three weeks.

57. Before conducting the survey of inhabitants and recording them in the questionnaires in their districts, the census takers will conduct a preliminary survey of premises (including non-residential premises) where the population could live, determine the total number of persons living in them and set up a convenient time for conducting the survey.

58. In the time allotted for the survey, the census takers will ask questions and fill in the questionnaires. The answers will be recorded without documentary evidence. Information from citizens may also be taken at permanent registration districts: census divisions and instructor stations. Parents or adult members of households will provide information about minor children.

59. When the survey is completed, premises will be checked in order to verify the correctness of the census. The time allocated for such checks will also be extended as compared with previous censuses - probably from 5 to 10 days.

60. As in the previous census, census materials will be processed at sectional centres, where local computer networks and servers, including scanners for the optical reading and processing of information from questionnaires from several regions of Kazakhstan, will be set up. Data from these centres will be sent to the Statistical Agency's information and computer centre in order to create a centralized database.

61. A specially developed strategy for disseminating information about the forthcoming census will ensure the timely submission of information, broaden the access of various categories of users and make it possible to obtain practically any data of interest while at the same time preserving their confidentiality. The initial results of the population census will be made public several months after the census is completed.

62. On the basis of the census, handbooks, compendiums, press releases, articles and other statistical and analytical materials will be prepared for users by the Statistical Agency and its territorial offices.
