



**United  
Nations**

Department of  
Economic and  
Social Affairs

# Supporting Population and Housing Censuses Beyond 2020 Round

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## UNSD activities on impact of COVID-19

### □ Three surveys

- 1st survey in March/April 2020 to collect information on the implementation of 2020 censuses
- 2nd survey: UNSD-World Bank collaboration, September 2020
- 3rd survey in December 2020/January 2021 to collect information on the implementation of censuses in 2020 and 2021

### □ Expert Group Meeting in 9-12 February in 2021

- To discuss potential problem
- To assess the impact of the pandemic on data quality
  - More than 100 experts from 24 countries and international organizations participated

## Challenges in conducting censuses under the pressure of the pandemic

- ❑ Conducting censuses as scheduled
  - About 75 percent of countries that planned to conduct their censuses in 2020 or 2021 had to postpone to late 2021 or 2022 or beyond
  - Countries which conducted their censuses in 2020, either had to extend the duration of enumeration or relied only on administrative registers
  
- ❑ Requirement to reduce face-to-face interview (paper or electronic) due to the pandemic
  
- ❑ Data quality concerns
  - Extending the duration of enumeration, sometimes more than six months
  - Difficulties to reach people at their place of residence
  - High risk for enumeration of people living in institutional places, homeless, ....
  - Unwillingness to participate in censuses during the pandemic

## Challenges in conducting censuses under the pressure of the pandemic

- ❑ Need for additional budget for ;
  - new modes of data collection (developing and testing);
  - procurement of personal protective equipment (PPEs) for field staff;
  - enhanced publicity campaign to inform public about the pandemic;
  - Online training for the field staff
  
- ❑ Comparability of census results with previous censuses, due to
  - changes in questionnaire data items
  - Extending the duration of enumeration (recall effect);
  - changes in methods of data collection (multi-mode data collection, new method for collecting data)
  - The effect of the pandemic on census measures, such as international/internal migration, unemployment rate

## Recommendations on possible modifications in census procedures

### ❑ Introducing self-enumeration data collection modes

to reduce direct contact to respondents

- Online questionnaire (CAWI)
- Paper-based self enumeration (PASI)
- Telephone interview (CATI)- for non-response follow-up

Key requirements for CAWI

- ✓ Building and dwelling register or list
- ✓ Reasonable assumptions about take-up rates

❑ In most cases, face-to-face interview (CAPI and/or PAPI) is still necessary for enumeration of some population groups- such as homeless, people living in a remote area or rural areas and non-response follow-up

❑ **Extensive testing** is required before adjustments are made to the design of data collection methods

## Possible modifications in census procedures

- Modifications in census questionnaire
  - Reducing census questions focusing on core topics, in order to shorten duration of the interview
  - Replacing census questionnaire with a short and long form
  
- Online management and monitoring system for field staff
- Online training for field staff

## Possible modifications in census procedures

- ❑ Use of administrative registers for improving the quality of population count:
  - Improving census coverage
  - Imputing non-responding households
  - Adjusting population living in institutional places

### Overall conclusions of the EGM

- Using administrative data and registers to replace the traditional census is accelerated by the difficulties caused by the pandemic and the accompanying costs

## Moving towards register based censuses

### ❑ Necessary pre-conditions

- Legal framework, role of NSO to be established
- Public and stakeholder approval
- Cooperation between NSO and register-owners
  
- Knowledge of administrative registers (available information, quality of data, process of updating information)
- Population register and other base registers
- Unified identification system
  
- Qualified and trained staff



## Transition from traditional to a combined or register-based censuses

### Main steps

- Constructing a statistical population register
- Linkage of data through a common identifier
- Data processing-editing, imputation and validations
- Updating regularly

Countries which do not have reliable population register use the combined census with full-field enumeration for :

- improving the accuracy of population count,
- Linking persons with their place of residence,
- validating, checking and updating the data derived from administrative sources
- adding new variables to census database

## UNSD 2021 Plan

- Developing global guidelines for register-based censuses – one or two expert group meetings; deadline end of the year
- Initiate the work on the 2030 Round global Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses
- Develop curricula for workshops
- Continue monitoring and reporting on census-taking in the pandemic – a dashboard is available at: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/census/COVID-19/>
- Provide technical assistance as requested by countries
- Finalize the technical report on the use of population and housing censuses and civil registration for generating SDGs
- Maintaining census topics database

# Civil Registration, Vital Statistics and Identity Management System

