



# Economic and Social Council

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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Conference of European Statisticians

#### Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses

##### Twenty-fourth Meeting

Geneva, 21–23 September 2022

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

##### **Adoption of the agenda and election of officers**

### **Annotated provisional agenda**

The Meeting of the Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses will be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, starting at 9:30 am on Wednesday 21 September 2022.

#### **I. Provisional agenda**

1. Adoption of the agenda and election of officers.
2. Lessons learned from censuses of the 2020 round.
3. Delaying a census due to external crises: impacts and lessons for the future.
4. Upcoming censuses in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region.
5. Transitions in census methodology; plans, experiences and innovations.
6. The long-term future: censuses of the 2030 round and beyond.
7. Revising the Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses for the 2030 round.
8. Other business.

#### **II. Annotations**

The meeting is organized following the provisions of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Statistical Programme for 2022<sup>1</sup>, adopted by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) and approved by the UNECE Executive Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> ECE/CES/2022/15, available from: <https://unece.org/statistics/documents/2022/04/working-documents/statistical-programme-2022>.



## **1. Adoption of the agenda and election of officers**

UNECE, in cooperation with partners, regularly organizes meetings of the Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses. The aims of these meetings are: to facilitate exchange of experience among countries; to increase knowledge of issues related to planning and conducting population and housing censuses; and to promote the development and implementation of the CES Recommendations for the Censuses of Population and Housing. This results in increased capacity by countries to plan and conduct their national population and housing censuses and to produce internationally comparable data.

## **2. Lessons learned from censuses of the 2020 round**

A majority of countries in the UNECE region have now completed their censuses for the 2020 round. Every census gives rise to learning—what went well, what could have been done better, what might be done differently in the future. This is even more true for the 2020 round than for most, given the unprecedented challenges faced by many countries in 2020 and 2021. Lessons learned can also include learning from the results themselves—what have we discovered about the populations of our countries? Are any of the findings unexpected? This session invites contributions on all kinds of lessons in any aspect of census planning, operations and engagement, and/or key findings from census data, insofar as they can offer valuable insights for the international community which may help shape censuses of the future.

## **3. Delaying a census due to external crises: impacts and lessons for the future**

At the height of the upheaval caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, many countries took the decision to delay their censuses. This applied primarily but not exclusively to those using direct enumeration. Other external crises, including disasters and political events, have also led to decisions to delay data collection either across a whole territory or parts of it. Several international census events in the past two years have explored the immediate impacts of the pandemic on census-taking. This session is not intended to revisit the same questions, but instead will focus specifically on the medium- and long-term repercussions of delaying a census. Contributions are invited to share findings about the impacts on data quality and comparability (over time, within and between countries); observations about the operational consequences of delaying a census; impacts on public and political support when a census is delayed; and thoughts on how future censuses could be made more resilient—either to avoid the need for delays in crisis situations, or to minimize adverse effects of delays.

## **4. Upcoming censuses in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region**

A small number of countries will not yet have conducted their census by the time of the Expert Group Meeting. These countries are invited to share information about their final planning and expectations, including how the results of pilot studies have impacted plans. In particular, countries are encouraged to share with the international community any innovative approaches that they plan to employ in their upcoming censuses.

## **5. Transitions in census methodology; plans, experiences and innovations**

Trends towards increasing use of administrative data, either as a source of census data or to support census operations, continue to gather pace, accelerated beyond expectations by the Covid pandemic. Other moves towards modernization, such as employing electronic devices, harnessing the power of machine learning and artificial intelligence, and integrating geospatial information into census activities also continue to improve the efficiency of censuses. This session invites contributions on existing experience, ongoing research or

future plans, in all areas of innovation and modernization of census methodology. Submissions could cover planning a census, conducting the census, processing data, disseminating results, or communicating with respondents and with users.

## **6. The long-term future: censuses of the 2030 round and beyond**

As one census cycle comes to an end, the next one begins, sometimes leaving little or no space in-between for deep reflection that could stimulate major changes of strategy and direction. The Group of Experts and its Steering Group have proactively facilitated such reflection in past years, with panel discussions at Expert Group Meetings and surveys of member States, resulting in thought pieces such as the paper *New Frontiers for Censuses Beyond 2020*. As the 2020 census round draws to an end for many countries, it is an ideal juncture to look far into the future once again. This session invites contributions that offer either speculation or concrete plans for censuses in 2030 and beyond. Contributions could also share ideas for integrating horizon-scanning mechanisms into the core work of census offices.

## **7. Revising the Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses for the 2030 round**

The terms of reference for 13 task forces to review and update the regional census recommendations were endorsed by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians in 2021. The groups have been formed and their chairs identified. In this session, selected task force chairs will share initial proposals for the revisions in their corresponding area of the recommendations.

## **8. Other business**

In this session participants may discuss additional census-related items proposed by the Secretariat or by other participants.

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