Economic Commission for Europe
Conference of European Statisticians

Sixty-fourth plenary session
Paris, 27-29 April 2016
Item 9 of the provisional agenda
Coordination of international statistical work in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region

In-depth review of on diversification of population census methodology and sources

Comments on the outcome of the in-depth review on diversification of population census methodology and sources

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This note summarizes the comments by members of the Conference of European Statisticians on the outcome of the in-depth review on diversification of population and housing census methodologies. The secretariat carried out the electronic consultation in February-March 2016.

A total of 13 countries and international organizations replied and provided comments reflected in the note.

The Conference will be invited to endorse the outcome of the in-depth review (as described in document number ECE/CES/2016/6/Add.1).
I. Comments on the outcome of the in-depth review on diversification of population census methodology and sources

1. A total of 13 replies were received in response to the request for comments, from: Canada, France, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, Tajikistan, United States, and Eurostat.

2. All responding countries expressed support to the outcome of the in-depth review by the Bureau based on the paper prepared by Finland and Turkey, with reference in particular to the establishment of the new UNECE Task Force on Register-based and Combined Censuses. In addition, the following general remarks were made:

   (a) Germany supports the creation of the task force to prepare new guidelines on the use of registers for census purposes, adding that this work should have higher priority than possible work on the comparability of census methods across countries.

   (b) Lithuania supports the outcomes of the in-depth review and welcomed the establishment of the new task force, noting that the preparation of timely guidelines on the uses of registers and administrative data for population and housing census is very much appreciated and eagerly awaited.

   (c) Tajikistan fully supports the document and noted that the work proposed will be beneficial to all UNECE countries including countries with economies in transition, addressing emerging issues regarding methodology, sources and technology of census round 2020.

   (d) Eurostat notes that the document provides a very accurate and complete report on the current situation and trends in countries with regard to the census, and supported in particular the conclusions and proposals for future work.

3. A number of countries (including Canada, France, Mexico, New Zealand, Tajikistan and United States) submitted specific comments on the text of the in-depth review documents prepared by Finland and Turkey. These comments will be transmitted to the authors of the report who may consider possible amendments reflecting the comments.

II. Views on the way forward

4. Some countries made the following comments or suggestions concerning the work proposed for the new Task Force on Register-based and Combined Censuses, and more in general future work in the field of population and housing censuses:

   (a) Tajikistan proposes that UNECE supports countries in the areas of internet response and GIS mapping (in addition to the guidelines on the use of registers). These technologies are expected to be adopted in Tajikistan in the 2020 census.

   (b) The Russian Federation notes that for its 2020 census it is planning to implement a brand new approach of data collection from the population – filling in census forms electronically by means of public data and communications networks, including Internet. In this respect Rosstat regarded as valuable experience the preparation of manuals by the UNSD and UNECE, as well as the participation in the UNECE annual expert meetings and training workshops at regional and sub-regional levels.

   (c) The United States, with regard to other areas to be considered for possible future work, notes that administrative data or register data can be used for portions of a census but not for a complete register based census; possible uses include, but are not limited to non-response follow-up, missing or incomplete data, imputation, and building of address lists.