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Conference of European Statisticians

Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses

Fifteenth Meeting

Geneva, 30 September – 3 October 2013

Report

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The fifteenth meeting of the joint UNECE/Eurostat Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses was held on 30 September – 3 October 2013, at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.
2. The meeting was attended by participants from Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Uzbekistan.
3. European Commission was represented by participants from Eurostat. Representatives from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-Stat) also participated at the meeting.
4. The Russian Federation, UNFPA and the Albania One UN Coherence Fund financially supported the attendance of a number of participants.

II. Organization of the meeting

5. Mr. Marc Hamel (Canada) was elected as Chairperson of the meeting.
6. The meeting discussed the following substantive topics:
 - (a) Census methodology
 - (b) Census technology, innovation and outsourcing
 - (c) Population bases
 - (d) Geographic characteristics
 - (e) Operational aspects of censuses
 - (f) Economic and educational characteristics
 - (g) Demographic, household and family characteristics
 - (h) Housing characteristics
 - (i) Disability
 - (j) Agriculture
 - (k) Migration and ethno-cultural characteristics
 - (l) National experiences in the 2010 census round
7. The discussion at the meeting was based on papers submitted by the participants. The papers and presentations are available on the UNECE website at: <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.10.census1.html>
8. Meeting participants acknowledged the work of the UNECE Task Forces and the Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses, including in particular the work of the representatives of the United States who unfortunately were unable to attend the meeting.
9. The summary of the main items discussed at the substantive sessions will be presented in the annex to the present report to be circulated to the participants by email after the meeting.

III. Future work

10. By April 2014 the UNECE Task Forces and Steering Group on Censuses will prepare new draft text for the CES Recommendations in their respective areas, taking into account the outcomes of the discussion and the decisions taken at the October 2013 meeting.
11. By June 2014 a draft of the CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round will be completed and made available on the UNECE website for review.
12. In the week 22-26 September 2014 the draft CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round will be discussed by the UNECE/Eurostat Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses in Geneva.
13. By December 2014 the final draft CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round will be prepared reflecting the outcomes of the discussion at the September 2014 meeting. The final draft of the recommendations will be submitted to the Conference of European Statisticians for review by the CES Bureau in February 2015, and adoption by the CES tentatively at its plenary session in June 2015.

14. The UNECE Secretariat and the Steering Group on Censuses will work in close coordination with the United Nations Statistics Division that is coordinating the revision of the Principles and Recommendations for the 2020 round of population and housing censuses at the level of the entire United Nations, with the objective of using efficiently the available resources and ensuring general consistency of the main concepts and definitions between the two sets of recommendations for the 2020 census round.

IV. Adoption of the report

15. The present report was adopted at the closing session of the meeting.

Summary of the main issues discussed at the substantive sessions

A. Census methodology

Documentation: Papers submitted by the UNECE Task Force on Census Methodology, Spain, Netherlands, Estonia and France.

1. The UNECE survey on the 2010 round of censuses revealed that an increasing number of countries in the UNECE region have conducted a register- based or combined census, and this trend is likely to continue. In preparing the 2020 CES census recommendations it will be important to make sure that the text be relevant to all countries, regardless of the census methodology that the countries plan to adopt. This will be a challenge, but the Task force will do its best to meet this expectation.
2. The discussions also covered the essential features of a census, that may need to be reviewed taking into account the methodological developments. It was observed that with regard to the essential features it would be advisable to take into account also the work for the revision of the global “Principles and Recommendations”, coordinated by UNSD. It was also noted that data dissemination and quality reporting are key aspects of the census, and it would be good to have references to them in the essential features.
3. The new recommendations may also include a discussion of the extent to which new census methodologies fulfils the essential features. It was also suggested to consider how these questions are dealt with in the EU census regulations.
4. Noting that some countries are integrating sample surveys in their census enumeration, it would be useful to provide guidance on small area sampling, which might be necessary if countries are to accurately report on detail levels.
5. With regard to the proposal by the Task Force for the new CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round, it was agreed that paragraphs 49-58 should be revised taking into account the different categories of census methodologies.
6. Concerning the national papers, the participants were interested in the degree of confidence attached to the individuals’ records from which Spanish census tables were compiled. It was indicated that individual record information in the administrative registers are cross-checked with sample survey data for consistency, and a 99 per cent match between sources was recorded. The validation of such records was further supported by the occurrence of the same information in other registers. It was further indicated that no post-enumeration operation was needed because the results are quite robust. They are also checked against LFS data on big cities with large foreign populations.
7. With regard to the paper by the Netherlands, participants enquired on the extent to which demands for complex data tables were met, taking into account the use of sample data. The census tables were generated starting from the simple to the more complex tables using linking of various registers and applying calibration weights to ensure consistency between the simple and complex tables. For confidentiality reasons a minimum threshold of five observations per cell is imposed on detailed tables.

8. With reference to the presentation on the French rolling census, the participants asked how communication is handled, also in relation to quality control and data comparability. The French expert explained that the type of communication evolved with the various phases of rolling out the new methodology. In the first place the communication aimed at explaining the complex nature of the new census taking. As to quality control, it was carried out on continuous basis as the housing registers were refreshed in the process and made accurate. Resulting data for the geographic areas can be compared only between the years when enumeration has taken place.

9. Concerning the three month period of enumeration in Estonia, it was explained that the three months period was not considered too long, and that in order to facilitate respondents' recollection the reference date for the census was set to New Year's eve.

B. Census technology, innovation and outsourcing

Documentation: Papers submitted by the UNECE Task Force on Census Technology, UNECE Steering Group on Population Censuses, and Poland.

10. The leader of the UNECE Task Force on Census Technology presented an overview of technologies that have been used by countries in the 2010 round of censuses, their plans for the next round of census and first proposals on new CES Recommendations for 2020 round.

11. In the discussion on the CES recommendations (paragraphs 139-147), the opportunity to refer to "declining trend" in the use of OCR/OMR technology in the next round of census was discussed. Data from the UNECE survey indicate a declining trend in the use of such technology, also due to the high costs associated to printing, storing, transporting and processing paper forms. However, some countries will still continue to use OCR/OMR technology, and this should be reflected in the recommendations.

12. The meeting proposed to include paragraphs 156a-156n in the chapter on Census Technology, to cover a number of technical issues related to obtaining of census data from administrative sources.

13. Take into consideration adding issues on evaluation quality of using technology in this chapter or adding to the general comments. Data quality is a matter of methodological and there should be included.

14. The representative of CSO Poland presented also new technologies used in 2010 Census Round on the Polish case study. During the discussion, participants drew attention to the lack of issues regarding quality. A lot of questions related to technology used in Poland during the 2010 Census as well as a balance between budget and hardware and software.

15. The handheld devices used for the paperless census in Poland, after the census were used for the agricultural census, for other surveys of the NSI, or donated to the police. Poland is planning to use the same approach based on use of new technologies also for the next (2021) census. It is possible that new technologies, related to Big Data could also be used for the next census. A big lesson would be that it is important to change the communication with society, in order to work in cooperation and in partnership with it.

16. Representatives of the UNECE Steering Group on Population Censuses presented the proposals for text on innovation and outsourcing for the new CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round.

17. In the discussion that followed, it was noted that in the United Kingdom the recruitment of census field staff was outsourced to an external company. This approach was considered successful, and yielded a major cost saving to the UK census.

18. In order to minimize the risk of problems associated with outsourcing, it is important that the technical specification of the work outsourced must be clearly defined at the beginning of the tendering process. It was observed that the UNSD Principles and Recommendations provide guidance on the qualities that a company should have (competence, reputation) and that this should be evaluated in the tendering and procurement.

19. It was noted that countries must follow national and/or EU legislation (where appropriate) for tenders (for instance, in some cases the contract must go to the cheapest company), and this should be reflected in the recommendations. However, cost should not be the only factor in deciding which bidding company is awarded the contract. Outsourcing can make some NSOs prisoners to cost reduction, and to the ways of working of the outsourcing company.

20. When printing and scanning of forms are outsourced, it was suggested that these tasks should be awarded to the same company, to ensure that the printed forms are fully compatible with the scanners.

C. Population bases

Documentation: Papers submitted by the UNECE Task Force on Population to be enumerated and geographic characteristics, and Eurostat.

21. In general, the proposals by the Task Force for the new CES recommendations on population bases for the 2020 census round were well received by the participants. A number of comments were provided by participants, as reported in the following paragraphs.

- a) A definition of population estimate should be added to the basic concepts.
- b) It could be considered to nest the concept of 'daily rest' in a hierarchical level of definitions about place of usual residence. The place where the person is living – without further specifications – was also mentioned as a possible definition.
- c) The use of the criterion of 'most of the time' instead of 'continuous time' was advanced at various moments of the discussion.
- d) The current proposal of definition of 'legal population' could be labeled as 'authorized population' (or similar qualifying adjectives), while the legal population would be defined as the population as defined by the national laws (and as such not necessarily comparable across countries).
- e) A definition of 'visitors' could be added to the list of additional population bases.
- f) The option of considering the 'working population' and the 'day-time population' as subset of the usually resident population was dismissed.
- g) A new concept of population ('annual resident population') was proposed for inclusion in the list of additional bases.
- h) In order to further highlight that the only recommended basis is the usually resident population, and the other are additional population bases, it was

suggested that the set of additional definitions could be moved to the end of the chapter.

- i) Children in primary and secondary education could be referred to as ‘persons of minor age’ or simply as ‘students’. In the former case, it should be considered where adult persons in primary and secondary education should be allocated.
- j) Students and workers should be treated with different rules. In particular, the former category should be allocated to the term-time address.
- k) Concerns were raised about the risks of under-/over-coverage of the military, diplomatic and naval personnel located abroad. It could be reconsidered whether these persons should be included in the population of the host country (and likewise excluded by the country of origin).
- l) Concerning the cases with multiple residences, it was suggested to consider a period of reference of one week rather than one year before the census in the relevant option.
- m) The coding of the place of residence to the precise address or with the geographic coordinates of the address as well as the production of population grids of 1 km² were acknowledged to be important elements for future censuses and their adoption was supported. The specific paragraph may be moved in the chapter of the CES Recommendations on geographic characteristics.
- n) The meaning of ‘place of enumeration’, mentioned in a few amendments, may be uncertain.
- o) For the allocation of persons living regularly in more than one country, the option of the allocation based on the moment of enumeration was considered the most appropriate.

22. Eurostat presented for the first time a new definition of population, the “annual resident population”, which is expected to be further refined over time. As first reactions to a concept which was acknowledged to be an attempt worthy of consideration, two countries expressed concerns about its applicability in traditional censuses, while other countries expressed interest and support towards this initiative. The concerns were actually based on the fact that those countries were applying a broad concept of ‘living’ to identify the usually resident population instead of the concept of continuous time over a period of twelve months, and that they perceived the new concept as pushing further the application of the concept of ‘intention of stay’. Eurostat clarified that this was not the case for the new concept, and that the peculiar approach of these two countries was actually more an issue for the compliance with the current concept of usually resident population.

D. Geographic characteristics

Documentation: Paper submitted by the UNECE Task Force on Population to be enumerated and geographic characteristics.

23. The participants discussed the proposals by the Task Force for the new CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round. Concerning the proposal to upgrade the topic “Urban and rural areas” to core topic, there was not much support. It was considered that a core topic should have a more unified/strict definition, but for this topic this would not be possible since the definition is too broad. It was agreed that the topic would remain a non-core topic.

24. Eurostat proposed to include “Degree of urbanization” as a new core topic, noting that this classification is already used by EU member states in several surveys, and is also approved by OECD. There was no unanimous agreement to include “Degree of urbanization” as a new core topic, but it was accepted as a non-core topic. The Task Force will draft a text for this topic taking into account the EU classification, but also the need to modify the text to facilitate the implementation also in non-EU countries.

25. The proposed change to the classification by size of locality was accepted.

26. A proposal to introduce a classification based on place of residence and place of work was discussed. Some countries considered the classification as too specific and complex, and therefore it should not be included in the recommendations. However, some element could be taken into account in the recommendations. For instance, persons with no fixed place of work could be classified as such. For persons working abroad, collecting country of work should be sufficient even if a lower level of geography would be better for assessment of frontiers workers’ patterns.

27. For the topics “Mode of transport to work and to school/college/university”, a new classification based on public versus private transport was discussed, but was not supported by the expert group because it was considered too complex (particularly the category for park-and-ride). As a result, it was agreed to keep the current classification, also to ensure comparability with results from previous censuses.

28. Eurostat noted that the usage of the terminology and approach of the Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM) in the new Recommendations could help reinforcing the role of the census in the modernisation of social statistics. GSIM distinguishes variables from concept systems. Variables describe a specific datum for a statistical unit and can be identified within a unit data record. They define the concepts of the topic and of its categories whereas concept systems describe the structure between concepts, e.g. a classification of the categories of a variable. The distinction between variables and concept systems can help to reach agreement on geographical characteristics, for instance when agreement to have geographical coordinates in the unit data records might be possible, though impossible in regard to a particular geographical classification (different user needs).

E. Operational aspects of censuses

Coverage, quality and evaluation

Documentation: Papers submitted by the UNECE Task Force on Coverage and quality, Austria and United Kingdom.

29. The chair of the task force presented the key findings of the survey of the 2010 round and then presented the five recommendations:

- a) Accuracy should be measured by all countries (by whatever method is deemed appropriate by individual NSIs);
- b) Accuracy measurements and methods should be published by all countries;
- c) Whichever method is chosen to measure accuracy it should result in a comparable set of output-oriented quantitative indicators, which would require further development;
- d) All countries should publish a national total population estimate adjusted to account for the findings of their accuracy measurement activities.
- e) At the national level countries should aim to publish statistics that are accurate to within x% of the (unknown) true value

30. The fifth recommendation was not unanimously supported by the task force and the chair invited views from the workshop participants.
31. There was support for the first four recommendations from all participants, but there was not support for the fifth from all countries.
32. Eurostat suggested going further with recommendation four, proposing that adjusted national totals should also be provided by age and sex., Most participants who provided comments on the fifth recommendation did not think it would be feasible.
33. There were concerns that it would be difficult to know whether population estimates were within 1% of the true value, because most countries did not measure accuracy to this level of precision (coverage surveys are not large enough) and they had no methods for measuring bias. Further, there were concerns about the cost of running sufficiently large coverage surveys to achieve this level of precision.
34. The chair of the task force noted that the UK had been able to produce a national population estimate with a 95% relative confidence interval of + 0.2%, and had measured bias using a national address register, but accepted that not all countries would be able to do this.
35. The first four recommendations were accepted by the Workshop, and the fifth was not.
36. The chair of the task force invited comments by email after the meeting on the new chapter and annex that had been drafted for the UNECE census guidelines.

Costs and benefits

Documentation: Papers submitted by the UNECE Task Force on Costs and benefits, and France.

37. In the discussion, the participants observed that an international comparison of costs and benefits of censuses is difficult due to underlying differences in costs structures and measurement related to the census methodology used in different countries. In addition, censuses often use public infrastructure (e.g. administrative registers) which is not set-up for census purposes, and accounting for the associated costs and benefits of using such infrastructure is generally complex.
38. The paper presented by France showed, among other things, a negative correlation between GDP per capita and a country's census method. It was noted that such a correlation does not automatically reflect a causal relationship. A country's choice of census methodology can be determined also by other factors, such as the country's infrastructure and culture. Culture or historical reasons may determine the public perception of conducting a census and how much a country is willing to spend on collecting census data.
39. Regarding the benefits of census data, it was mentioned that in some countries they are well-recognized while in others the census costs are the focus of attention. Based on this, it was agreed that there is a need for including measurements capturing the benefits of census data, and that the relation between census costs and the quality of census data should be taken into account. When evaluating the costs and benefits of censuses, attention should be also paid to the outcomes of collecting and processing census data and how well the census results fulfill the purposes and societal needs. Careful consideration should also be given to the question of how overall costs (public infrastructure and census) can be minimized.

Legislation

Documentation: Papers submitted by the UNECE Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses.

40. The topic was not covered in the 2010 CESR, but it was proposed to include a new section proposed in a new chapter on Operational Framework. The paper set out the proposed text in full. There was no clear response from countries to the discussion points as to whether or not:

- a) CESR should provide information on the framework of EU Census Regulations;
- b) there is any interest in making recommendation on enforcement of non-compliance (refusals); and
- c) more attention need to be given to explaining the role and importance of data protection legislation

41. In view of the fact that the UNECE survey showed that all countries had data protection legislation in place suggested that the third point was already well understood. If included at all, the first two points should not be covered in any detail.

42. There were no specific proposals to change the draft recommendations.

Outsourcing

Documentation: Paper submitted by the UNECE Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses.

43. The topic was covered in Chapter 1 of the 2010 CESR, but it was proposed to expand the section on outsourcing and incorporate this into the new chapter on Technology. The paper set out the proposed text in full, identifying a number of specific potential activities for outsourcing:

- a) printing of questionnaires
- b) recruitment and training of field staff
- c) publicity campaign
- d) translation of field materials into other languages
- e) delivery and/or collection/return of questionnaires/field documents
- f) design and provision of questionnaire tracking system
- g) provision of mapping services
- h) primary data capture and coding
- i) questionnaire destruction
- j) provision of call centre/telephone help line
- k) design and provision of online response technology
- l) online/web access design for outputs
- m) data storage
- n) data editing and/or imputation
- o) quality assurance
- p) evaluation

44. In discussion countries generally endorsed the proposals that more focus should be given to issues of:

- a) the benefits and challenges;
- b) protecting confidentiality;
- c) gaining public confidence;

- d) ensuring data quality;
- e) project managing the contracts;
- f) seeking the best value-for-money solution rather than the cheapest; and
- g) ensuring complete compatibility between the questionnaire printing and scanning operations.

45. There were no specific proposals to change the draft recommendations.

Communications and publicity

Documentation: Paper submitted by the UNECE Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses.

46. The paper proposed consolidating and expanding the material previously included in Chapter 1, Appendix VI and Appendix VII of the CESR. The paper set out the proposed text in full, giving specific attention to:

- a) identifying key stakeholders in:
 - i. Central government
 - ii. Local government bodies
 - iii. Academics and education providers
 - iv. Ethnic/faith communities
 - v. Press and the media
 - vi. Public and health service providers
 - vii. Disability groups
 - viii. Market research and the commercial sector
- b) developing strategies to engage with specifically targeted hard-to count population such as:
 - i. students
 - ii. ethnic minority communities
 - iii. the elderly
 - iv. recent immigrants
 - v. parent of young babies
 - vi. young adult males (14 countries)
- c) developing the messages of the seven 'E's
 - i. Engage to make people aware
 - ii. Educate about benefits
 - iii. Explain what to do
 - iv. Encourage participation
 - v. Enforce compliance
 - vi. Express thanks
 - vii. Extol the value
- d) utilizing new social media such as twitter and facebook, and emphasising the value and importance of using schools to educate both children and their parents alike.
- e) the different emphasis to be given to communications in countries with a register-based census where there is less direct contact with the general public and where less importance is attached to the census as a unique event.

47. There were no specific proposals to change the draft recommendations.

Dissemination

Documentation: Paper submitted by the UNECE Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses.

48. The paper proposed expanding the material previously included in Chapter 1, to reflect more recent dissemination technologies such as static web pages and interactive online databases. The revised text would go into a new chapter on Operational Framework in which references to 'value added' products and 'mashing-up' data from other sources would be added, and the importance of data visualisation, particularly in encouraging wider public usage, emphasised.

49. The paper set out the proposed text in full, and there were no specific proposals to change the draft recommendations.

Documentation, metadata and archiving

Documentation: Paper submitted by the UNECE Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses.

50. The paper proposed stressing the importance of preparation and archiving (and being able to subsequently retrieve) good documentation and metadata. The short section on metadata in Chapter 1 of 2010 CESR is to be expanded to recommend specific key metadata items such as:

- a) methodological papers
- b) census questions
- c) changes to definitions since previous census
- d) levels of response
- e) levels of imputation
- f) data dictionary/glossary of terms

and for the revised text to go into a new chapter on Operational Framework. Though only 10 countries keep the census records them for eventual public access, the potential long-term value of such records for future socio-historical and genealogical research should be recognised.

51. The paper set out the proposed text in full, and there were no specific proposals to change the draft recommendations.

F. Economic and educational characteristics

Economic characteristics

Documentation: Paper submitted by the UNECE Task Force on Economic and educational characteristics.

52. The task force on the Economic and Educational Characteristics proposed changes to the classifications used for some of the core topics on economic characteristics.

53. Based on the results of the UNECE survey on national practices in the 2010 census round, most of the countries were not able to fully comply the classification on (the usual and/or current) economic activity that was recommended at the 2010 recommendations.

54. The participants did not suggest any new core topics or the removal of the current core topics. No changes were proposed adding or removing any non-core topic either.

55. With regard to the topic “Activity status” (current and usual), the task force suggested removing the category “Never worked before” from the recommended classification. Both the ILO and the participants supported the proposal.

56. The task force suggested removing the category “Homemaker” from the recommended classification of activity status. This proposal was supported by many of the participants, but ILO stated that this functional category is important for social and gender analysis. Many of the countries do not collect this information and the participants of the conference agreed to make this category optional rather than merge it with the category “Others”.

57. ILO had a proposal to use terms “Labour force” instead of “Economically active” and “Outside labour force” instead of “Not economically active”. This proposal was widely supported by the members of the meeting.

58. With regard to the topic “Status in employment”, the task force proposed to make the category “Members of producers’ co-operatives”(MPC) optional. This was also supported by the ILO.

59. The task force proposed a new combined category with Contributing family workers and Members of producers’ co-operatives. ILO did not agree with this proposal. The meeting agreed not to add a new category, but to make the category “Members of producers’ co-operatives” optional.

60. The meeting ended up to suggest the following classification:

- (1.0) Employees
- (2.0) Self-employed
 - (2.1) Employers
 - (2.2) Own-account workers
 - (2.3) Contributing family workers
 - (2.4) Members of producers’ co-operatives (optional)
- (3.0) Not stated/Not applicable (not status included in ICSE-93)

61. The participants were informed that some important revisions of the definitions and classifications of economic activity status and other economic variables were discussed at the International Conference of Labour Statisticians taking place on 3-11 October 2013. The Task Force will take account of the results of the discussions at the ICLS when drafting the text for the CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round.

Educational characteristics

Documentation: Paper submitted by the UNECE Task Force on Economic and educational characteristics.

62. The task force expressed appreciation for the support provided by UNESCO in preparing proposed text for the CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round on educational characteristics. The participants of the meeting did not have any additional topics of proposals.

63. The task force proposed to use of the new ISCED 2011 classification of the level of educational attainment in the 2020 census. For the field of education, the terminology ISCED Fields of Education and Training 2013 revision should be used.

64. UNESCO had also proposed a number of revisions of the recommendations in order to update the terminology and vocabulary. The participants in the meeting agreed with those changes.

65. Literacy should remain a non-core topic, but it was suggested to strengthen the wording such that if no other sources are available, inclusion should be considered.

G. Demographic, household and family characteristics

Documentation: Paper submitted by the UNECE Task Force on Demographic, household and family characteristics.

66. In the discussion, it was noted that in many cases the de facto situation is not the legal marital situation, therefore, elevating de facto marital status to a core topic is important. In addition, de facto marital status in many countries is already captured in the relationship questions. An exception is register-based censuses, where data on cohabiting couples is not always available.

67. Families are getting more complex. To capture the evaluation and legal environment of families, countries need to adapt their questionnaires. Canada uses questions on relation in order to capture the different forms of families, including same-sex couples.

68. In many countries, data on same-sex unions are not reliable and measurement difficulties persist. For example, in Finland the same method that is used to measure de facto marital status cannot be applied to measure same-sex couples. France expressed doubts that good quality data could be obtained on same sex unions. The discussant proposed to build on good practice examples and learn from other countries in order to obtain good quality data and reach a better comparability.

69. Several countries mentioned difficulties in measuring reconstituted families. The relationship matrix can be used to capture reconstructed families. The problem, however, is to get the respondent to answer these questions.

70. On the topic of semi-independent housing, Eurostat pointed out that here is a high risk of double enumerations. For example, prisoners who are under probation can be counted as in institution, but they can also be counted within the households. There are also other forms of housing that are not straightforward to classify, such as bed and breakfast housing that can also be included in semi-independent. There is a need for a clearer guidance on how to use the terms of private and institutional housing.

71. It is necessary to distinguish clearly the recommendations on primary data from those on derived topics and tabulation. Countries may have different ways of arriving at the results on derived topics.

72. In concluding the discussion, it was agreed that the Task Force on Demographic, Household and Family Characteristics would pursue the drafting of recommendations on the six topics where the need for changes was identified. It would analyze the good practice in these areas and consider the comments provided in the discussion.

H. Housing characteristics

Documentation: Paper submitted by the UNECE Task Force on Housing characteristics.

73. With regard to concepts and definitions, it was noted that the enumeration of other housing units was a problem for some countries, and that one reason for not complying

with the concept of living quarters, housing units and collective living quarters is connected to the use of registers (these units are not in the registers). Nevertheless, it was accepted not to change any of the definitions.

74. The definition of “room” in terms of a minimum size of 4 square metres shall not be changed.

75. The TF noted that the concept of homelessness is used in the chapter on households and families as well as in the housing chapter of the CES Recommendations and treated somehow differently. In the topic “household status” only primary homeless have to be reported as a separate category whereas in the topic of “housing arrangements” primary and secondary homeless persons have to be reported. The TF proposed that only primary homeless should be enumerated as homeless. Persons moving between temporary accommodations should be enumerated where they stay on census day (private household, shelters) because most of the countries did so in the 2010 census round.

76. The delegate from the UK raised his concern about putting homelessness into the housing section of the CESR. This question has been discussed ten years before. It was proposed to refer the section on homelessness back to the Steering Group.

77. The TF proposed to change the status of the topics “water supply system”, “bathing facilities” and “toilet facilities” to non-core topics. This proposal was supported by the Netherlands and Iceland, but strongly opposed by the delegate from the WHO. In many parts of the European continent as well as the CIS countries information on these topics is essential in order to measure progress in sanitation and drinking water. If they drop out from the list core topics, many countries where the information is relevant and needed could delete these topics from the census questionnaires.

78. It was proposed by UNECE to keep these topics as core topics, but to add a text indicating that countries with virtually full coverage of the facilities in question may choose not to include these topics in their census. The participants expressed general support to this compromise solution.

79. The TF proposed a new hierarchy and categorization for the topic “occupancy status”:

- (1.0) Occupied conventional dwellings with one or more usual residents
- (2.0) Conventional dwellings with no usual residents at time of census
 - (2.1) Conventional dwellings reserved for seasonal or secondary use
 - (2.2) Conventional dwellings with residents not included in the census (formerly 3.0)
- (2.3) Vacant dwellings
 - (2.3.1) Vacant for sale
 - (2.3.2) Vacant for rent
 - (2.3.3) Vacant for demolition
 - (2.3.4) Other vacant or not known

80. This classification is recommended at the one-digit-level but optional at the two- and three digit level.

81. The proposal was not supported because of the different type of dwellings with residents not included in the census. The topic “occupancy status” remains unchanged.

82. The TF proposed some changes for paragraphs 699 to 703 in the CES Recommendations which were accepted.

I. Disability

Documentation: Paper submitted by the UNECE Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses.

83. It was noted that collecting data on disability in a population census has a number of disadvantages. However, there is an increased need and demand for data on disability, for example from disability groups, and the census is used in countries where no other sources are available.

84. For the new census recommendations, it was proposed to insert a link referring to the short set of questions to be included in the census questionnaire, developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics. The participants noted that the census recommendations are a long-living document, and any potential changes of the Washington Group short set of questions could lead to confusion about what questions should be considered by countries.

J. Agriculture

Documentation: Paper submitted by the UNECE Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses.

85. The discussion on agriculture concluded to accept the changes proposed by the task force in cooperation with FAO. It was mentioned that agricultural activity is closely linked to economic activity, and therefore the text should be included next to or within the chapter dealing with economic characteristics.

K. Migration and ethno-cultural characteristics

Migration characteristics

Documentation: Paper submitted by the UNECE Steering Group on Migration and ethno-cultural characteristics.

86. The leader of the Task Force presented the results of the survey on national practices in the 2010 census round, and the work of the Task Force in terms of reviewing the CES Recommendations and suggesting possible changes for the chapter on Migration.

87. No change was recommended to the list of core and non-core topics, although a number of countries reported collecting information on the non-core topic of “country of previous residence”. A surprising number of countries reported collecting information on the “reason for migration”, another non-core topic. These topics could be considered as new core topics, also noting that “country of previous residence” is treated as a core topic in the United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses. The Expert Group was reluctant, however, to add more core topics in this section. The general consensus seems to favour not promoting these topics as core. As well, it was asked that the Task Force review the list of derived topics which appear to be infrequently collected by countries in the UNECE region.

88. The presentation noted that there was confusion among countries around topics related to international and internal migration. The Expert Group was recommended that these topics be more clearly distinguished in the Recommendations.

89. There was considerable discussion around “circular migration” and whether this should be considered a new topic for the Recommendations. It was noted that there is currently a UNECE Task Force on Circular Migration, and that this Task Force should

consider in its deliberations whether this is a new migration topic be added to the Recommendations. The Expert Group noted, however, that this could be a difficult topic to measure in a traditional census, and possibly by register-based censuses, and could lead to double counting of international migrants in countries. It was also mentioned that there is no international definition of circular migration. Although the Expert Group recognized the emerging relevance of the topic, the uncertainty due to the current state of play about the statistical definition of circular migration suggested to postpone its consideration as census topic.

90. It was mentioned that the Recommendations should focus on topics related to measuring the stock of international migrants, rather the flow of international migrants, given that it is more suitable for census to capture stocks (and not flows). This should be clearly stated in the Recommendations.

91. The presentation raised the issue of how to capture dual and multiple citizenships in regard to the citizenship topic. There was no consensus by the Expert Group on how best to do this, but it was agreed that the issue needs to be discussed in the Recommendations.

92. It was recommended that more clarity be provided on the concept of year of arrival and that this should be the recommended concept for the Recommendations (and not year that permanent residence was obtained). Year of arrival is a better measure of the length of residence in a country for international migrants, and therefore, the more suitable concept to measure socio-economic integration of immigrants.

93. There was some discussion on the topic of birthplace of parents, and the need for countries where possible to capture information on “mixed couples”. It was noted that while a few countries collect information on place of birth of grandparents, it is not a topic that should be added to the Recommendations.

94. Finally, the presentation raised possible new topics for consideration of adding to the Recommendations based on the country survey and the deliberations of the Task Force. Emigration was one such topic. It was noted that emigration would be a difficult topic to capture in a census, but is an important topic to consider for the study of migrant flows. It was suggested that the Recommendations mention this topic, noting that it would be difficult to measure in censuses.

Ethno-cultural characteristics

Documentation: Paper submitted by the UNECE Steering Group on Migration and ethno-cultural characteristics.

95. In summary, there were no substantive proposals to change the Recommendations for the 2020. For the ethnicity topic, the main features of the proposed text covered:

- a) Relevance for understanding cultural diversity
- b) Information used for monitoring equality and discrimination
- c) Subjective, politically sensitive
- d) Often relates to very small populations – thus potentially disclosive in outputs
- e) Multi-dimensional – ancestry to be considered as a concept
- f) Use of ‘nationality’ to be avoided
- g) Indigenous populations to be recognised
- h) Self declaration with multi-response option
- i) Voluntary
- j) Non-core topic
- k) Consultation with community leaders/key users
- l) Criteria and classifications to be explained

m) Classification depends on national circumstances – none recommended

96. Discussion at the meeting focused on (a) whether or not the topic should be core, (b) whether the information should be collected on a mandatory or voluntary basis, and (c) the value of open-ended questions as opposed to questions with pre-coded tick box response option.

97. The view was expressed that questions in the census should only be ‘core’ if they were easy to answer and were non-sensitive. In view of the fact that some countries are prohibited from collecting such information, the consensus was that the topic should remain non-core. There was less agreement about whether such information should be collected on a voluntary or mandatory basis. The survey showed that In 24 countries the information was provided in a voluntary basis and only in 6 countries it was mandatory. One proposed solution was to ask the question on a mandatory basis but include a response category that allowed respondents to indicate that they preferred not to provide the information.

98. The value of open-ended questions is that they offer the respondent the right of total self-expression. The disadvantage is that the subsequent coding of responses and their allocation into a meaningful classification for output becomes more difficult and costly

99. There were no specific proposals to change the draft recommendations

100. For the religion topic, the main features of the proposed text covered:

- a) Relevance for understanding cultural diversity
- b) Information used for monitoring equality and discrimination
- c) Subjective, politically sensitive
- d) Often relates to very small populations – thus potentially disclosive in outputs
- e) Definitions and concepts unchanged: either:
 - i. A religious or spiritual belief or faith, regardless of whether or not this belief or faith is represented by an organised group; or
 - ii. An affiliation with, or membership of, an organised group or body having a specific religious or spiritual tenets and/or practices
- f) Self declaration
- g) Voluntary
- h) Non-core topic
- i) Consultation with faith leaders/key users
- j) Criteria and classifications to be explained
- k) Detailed classification depends on national circumstances – no change proposed to basic classification
 - (1.0) Christianity
 - (1.1) Catholic
 - (1.2) Orthodox
 - (1.3) Protestant (including Anglican, Baptist, Brethren, Calvinist, Evangelical, Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal, Pietist, Presbyterian, Reformed, and other Protestant groups)
 - (1.4) Jehovah’s Witnesses
 - (1.5) Oriental Christian
 - (1.6) Other Christian
 - (2.0) Islam
 - (2.1) Alawit (Nusayris)
 - (2.2) Ismaili (Seveners)
 - (2.3) Ithna'ashari (Twelvers)
 - (2.4) Shia
 - (2.5) Sufi

- (2.6) Sunni
- (2.7) Zaydi (Fivers)
- (3.0) Judaism
- (4.0) Buddhism
- (5.0) Hinduism
- (6.0) Sikhism
- (7.0) Other religious groups
- (8.0) No religion

101. Discussion at the meeting focused on (a) whether or not the topic should be core, (b) whether the information should be collected on a mandatory or voluntary basis, and (c) should the classification be revised, for example by including: fewer categories of Christian; fewer categories of Islam; more 'other' categories – if so which ones; and putting the 'No religion' response option first.

102. In view of the fact that some countries are prohibited from collecting such information, the consensus was that the topic should remain non-core and voluntary. There was support among some countries that the 'No religion' option should be put first so as not to 'lead' the respondent into answering. The same benefits and disadvantages of totally open-ended questions are also relevant here.

103. There were no specific proposals to change significantly the draft recommendations.

104. For the language topic, the main features of the proposed text covered:

- a) Relevant for understanding cultural diversity
- b) Information used for monitoring equality and discrimination
- c) Subjective, politically sensitive
- d) Often relates to very small populations – thus potentially disclosive in outputs
- e) Non-core
- f) Options for type information to be collected remain unchanged:
 - (a) Mother tongue, defined as the first language spoken in early childhood at home.
 - (b) Main language, defined as the language which the person commands best.
 - (c) Usual language(s), defined as the ones most often currently spoken at home and/or work.
 - (d) Knowledge of language(s), defined as the ability to speak and/or write one or more designated languages
- g) Countries to decide which is/are most appropriate
- h) Consultation with community leaders/key users
- i) Criteria and classifications to be explained
- j) Classifications should be as comprehensive as possible and should attempt to identify regional or languages/dialects and sign language

105. There was too little time during the meeting for delegates to respond to the suggested discussion points:

- a) Should the topic be core?
- b) If so, which type of information should be recommended?
- c) And should the CESR then attempt to propose a formal classification?
- d) What other language-related questions might be proposed?

106. Consequently, there were no specific proposals to change the draft recommendations.

L. National experiences in the 2010 census round

Documentation: Paper submitted by Andorra and Belarus.

107. Andorra presented the plans for the 2014 population and housing census, that should also allow establishing population and housing registers to be subsequently used for a continuous census. The participants expressed interest in the plans by Andorra, and suggested considering similar recent experiences of countries and territories with small population, like the Faroe Islands.

108. Belarus shared the experience on the 2009 population census, for which information technologies were used extensively to facilitate the census process. Among the difficulties that Belarus encountered in carrying out the census were the selection of the interviewers, the participants' reluctance to respond to some of the questions and financial challenges.

109. For the future, Belarus noted that it will try to collect data from registers and move towards using more paperless technologies. The challenge, however, remained with regards to rural areas where only 10 percent of the population has access to internet, as compared to 70 percent in the cities. Belarus also highlighted that migration is becoming an important topic for census due to the large emigration in recent years.

110. Meeting participants discussed the question on paperless information gathering. Canada noted that in the future it would like to move away from traditional mail. Poland in their previous census round applied a parallel method that allows using both - the internet questionnaires and interviewers with tablet computers.

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