

REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP

I. Organization and attendance

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) organized the Workshop on Population and Housing Censuses for countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, in partnership with the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation (Rosstat) and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT) and with financial support from the Russian Federation. The Workshop was held in Geneva on 22 September 2014, back-to-back with the meeting of the UNECE-Eurostat Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses (23-26 September 2014).

2. The Workshop was attended by 40 census experts and managers representing the following countries and organizations: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Georgia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Montenegro, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan, Eurostat, CIS-Stat and United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). The meeting was also attended by experts from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) International, and the University of London, invited by the Secretariat. Experts from the United Kingdom and CIS-Stat facilitated the discussion.

3. The present report contains the summary of the discussion and the recommendations of the Workshop. The presentations made at the Workshop are available at the UNECE website¹.

II. Purpose

4. The purpose of the Workshop was to provide an opportunity to census managers and experts from participating countries to discuss their experiences with the census of the 2010 round, review the draft CES Recommendations for the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses, identify issues and discuss proposals for the Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses.

¹ <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2014.09.census2.html>

III. Summary of the discussion

A. National reports on censuses of 2010 round

5. In the first session of the Workshop, countries provided short updates on the operations related to their census of the 2010 round. The Republic of Moldova and Georgia provided more detailed reports on their censuses, conducted respectively in May and in November 2014. The presentations and the following discussion highlighted some interesting issues and difficulties encountered by countries, and lessons learnt from their census operations.

6. In the Republic of Moldova the census covered all dwellings, regardless of their occupancy status. Persons absent for more than 12 months were enumerated separately. The questionnaire included questions on disability. Maps were purchased from the cadastre and used for GIS and census operations, increasing the efficiency of the enumeration. Some population groups of orthodox religion refused to participate in the census.

7. In Georgia the population census was conducted together with the agricultural census. The questionnaire included questions on disability, migration (including questions concerning emigrants), and agricultural activities. Potential problems reported at the time of the workshop (two months before the census) included the difficulty to find enough skilled enumerators, and the possibility of refusal to participate by certain population groups.

8. The discussion that followed the presentations covered a number of issues, including the difficulties in recruiting skilled enumerators and training them properly, the reluctance of selected religious groups to participate in the census, and the low item response rates on questions on ethnic and religious affiliation.

9. With regard to the decreasing participation in the census registered in several countries, it was noted that in most countries participation in the census is mandatory by law (as stipulated in UNSD global recommendations) and often there are sanctions for those who do not participate, while in some countries participation is not mandatory. In Russia, the number of refusals increased significantly in the 2010 census (more than five millions on any questions of the questionnaire, compared to about one million in the 2002 census). New legislation is planned for the next census, making participation mandatory, and hopefully reducing refusals.

10. Some countries reported as a problem the difficulty to verify and prove the accuracy of the information provided by respondents. It was observed that post enumeration surveys can help check the quality of specific questions.

11. Concerning the cases of total non-response, some countries reported making use of administrative data or biometric passports, at least for basic information. However, it was noted that in many countries administrative sources have limited data and are of poor quality. Even using biometric data from passport registers have some limitations, as passport registers include only national citizens.

12. Some experts noted the difficulties of enumerating persons in institutions. It was clarified that if the enumeration is based on the usual residence, then those staying in institutions for less than 12 months should not be enumerated in the institution, as they should be considered as resident at their usual residence.

13. Several countries reported that census data were disseminated in innovative ways such as through the web, with access to micro data, with geo referencing and maps. There is a growing demand for census data, which could be used for in depth analysis of phenomena, (e.g. geographical and economic aspects). Census data can be used also to investigate the influence of migration on population size and composition.

B. Analysis of results from the 2010 census round

14. The representative of CIS-Stat presented the results of a study of migration based on the censuses of the 2010 round in CIS countries. The study provided a number of significant and interesting results. For instance, in countries where data were collected on both the usually resident and the present population, the present population was significantly lower (about 5-6%) than the usual resident population, as a result of emigration.

15. Information was presented on the type of data collected in CIS countries on temporarily present and temporarily absent persons. An interesting example was presented on migration between Tajikistan and Russia, based on data from the 2010 censuses in the two countries and from administrative sources.

16. Finally, the plans by CIS-Stat for the 2020 census round were presented, including the harmonization of the census timing, topics and definitions, and the definition of a number of tables for better understanding of migration processes among CIS countries.

C. Plans for next censuses of 2020 round

17. In this session, countries provided a short update on the preparations for the census of the 2020 round, highlighting innovations and significant issues.

18. In Belarus amendments to the census law are being considered to make participation in the census compulsory. Moreover, the possibility of adopting internet data collection is being evaluated.

19. In Georgia work is under way to create an address register. Online response is also being evaluated for the census of the 2020 round, in order to reduce non response.

20. In Kazakhstan the next census is planned in 2020, and a pilot in 2018. It is expected to use paper questionnaires, but other forms of data collection might be tested in the pilot. Work is also planned to develop an address register.

21. In Kyrgyzstan there are plans to maximize the use of data from administrative registers, including data on passports. The possibility to exchange data with other countries to improve data on migration will also be considered.

22. In the Republic of Moldova there are plans to combine a traditional census and internet response. The registration of personal ID data in the census will also be considered.

23. In Russia the 2020 census could be based on internet data collection, with the option for the respondents to use a paper questionnaire. Data could be collected also on the present, or legally present population. A micro-census covering 2% of the households is also being considered.

24. In Tajikistan, work is planned to improve maps, which caused problems for past censuses. The methodology will be probably traditional, but internet data collection could be tested in one region in 2017. Mobile census-taking locations will also be tested.

D. Draft CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round

25. The representative from the United Kingdom, also member of the UNECE Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses, presented the main changes from the 2010 to the draft 2020 CES Census Recommendations².

26. The representative from CIS-Stat noted some difficulties that can be expected for CIS countries in view of the next census round. They include the risk of double enumeration for children who study away from the family home, but also for workers or military personnel living away from home. Other issues on which CIS countries may have difficulties include the geo referencing of census data, and the recommended definition of urban and rural areas.

27. Participants from various countries commented on possible difficulties in the implementation of the new CES Recommendations for the 2020 round. Problems discussed included the definitions of locality, urban and rural areas, and the identification of the place of usual residence for students returning home regularly, and for military personnel.

E. Possible changes to the draft CES Recommendations

28. Based on the outcomes of the discussions at the previous sessions, the participants considered some proposals for amendments to the new draft CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round. It was agreed to propose the following changes at the UNECE-Eurostat meeting on population and housing censuses (23-26 September):

² Presentation available on the workshop web page:
<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2014.09.census2.html>

1) In the draft text on population basis (doc. ECE/CES/GE.41/2014/7), the following text should be included, possibly with editorial changes if necessary: “*The general rule in relation to where the most of the daily night rest is spent applies to persons in compulsory military service as well as to members of the armed forces who live in military barracks or camps*”. This text was included as paragraph 162. f) in the CES Recommendations for the 2010 census round, but the whole paragraph 162 was proposed for deletion in the new CES Recommendations for the 2020 round.

2) In the draft text on population basis (doc. ECE/CES/GE.41/2014/7), the top of table 1 should be amended as follows:

Table 1

Rules for usual residence of workers and students living away from family home for more than 12 months

Category	Place of work/study	Regular* return to family home	Inclusion in the usually resident population of the country	Place of usual residence <u>within</u> the country
Workers	In the country	Yes	Yes	Family home
		No	Yes	Own address Term-time address
	Abroad	Yes	Yes	Family home
		No	No	None

3) In the draft text on geographic characteristics (doc. ECE/CES/GE.41/2014/7) it is proposed to consider the derived topic “**Urban and rural areas**” (paragraphs 37-42) as a **core topic**, taking into account the fact that this is a core topic in the global Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses (prepared by UNSD), and that the large majority of UNECE countries considered the topic in the 2010 census round. The participants in the workshop recognized the fact that although the CES Recommendations include a definition of urban areas recommended for international comparisons, countries might wish to consider alternative definitions of urban areas (see paragraph 38).

IV. Conclusions

29. Participants agreed to present for consideration at the UNECE-Eurostat meeting on population and housing censuses (23-26 September) the proposals for changes to the new CES Recommendations for the 2020 round described in para. 28 above.

30. Participants expressed appreciation of the Workshop as an opportunity to discuss census issues that are of specific interest to countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. They found it particularly useful that the Workshop was organized back-to-back with the UNECE-Eurostat expert meeting, which allowed linking the discussions at the Workshop to the broader context of the UNECE region, and in particular to the preparation of the CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round.

31. It was proposed to schedule a similar workshop for countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia before the next UNECE-Eurostat expert meeting on censuses in Geneva, tentatively on 28-29 September 2015 (dates to be confirmed). The workshop should allow sharing experiences and discuss further issues regarding the adoption of the new CES census recommendations. In particular, the workshop could be used to review the possible uses of registers, administrative data, internet response and other innovative technology for censuses.
