



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
10 July 2017

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses

Nineteenth Meeting

Geneva, 4-6 October 2017

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda and election of officers

Annotated provisional agenda

To be held in room VII at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, starting at 9:30 am on Wednesday, 4 October 2017.

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda and election of officers.
2. Innovations in census methodology and use of new data sources.
3. Innovations in census technology.
4. Evaluating the census and measuring data quality.
5. Meeting users' needs.
6. Production and dissemination of geo-referenced census data.
7. Cooperation models among countries.
8. Integration between census and social surveys.
9. Sustainable Development Goals' needs and censuses.
10. Future work.
11. Other business.

II. Annotations

The meeting is organised jointly with Eurostat following the provisions of the UNECE Statistical Programme for 2017, adopted by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) and approved by the UNECE Executive Committee.

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1. Adoption of the agenda and election of officers

The UNECE in cooperation with Eurostat organize regularly meetings for the Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses. The main purpose of the meetings is to facilitate the exchange of experiences among countries, increase knowledge on various issues related to the planning and conduction of population and housing censuses, 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 the population and housing censuses and produce data comparable across countries. The proposed provisional agenda will be presented for the approval by the participants of the meeting.

2. Innovations in census methodology and use of new data sources

Available information on plans for the 2020 census round show that a significant number of UNECE countries, particularly in Western Europe, will increasingly adopt alternative census methodologies, often making use of data from administrative and multiple sources. Some countries are also considering the use of “big data” (from public administrations or the private sector) either as a direct source of census data or for improving the coverage and quality of address lists.

In this session, countries will discuss their plans for using alternative census methodology and new data sources in the 2020 census round. The results of tests, when available, will be presented, so that the experiences of single countries will be discussed and possibly compared with those from other countries.

Whatever census methodology is used, some population groups remain difficult to count. They may include, for instance, immigrants (especially those arrived in the country recently, with undocumented status), refugees and asylum seekers, students, transient populations, homeless or roofless people. In this session countries are expected to discuss their past experiences or plans for the future census concerning the counting of hard-to-count groups, or possibly variables that are hard to collect in a census, such as sexual identity and/or gender identity.

In the framework of this session, the UNECE Task Force on Register-based and combined censuses is expected to present the draft “Guidelines on the use of registers and administrative data for population and housing censuses”.

3. Innovations in census technology

Plans for the 2020 census round show that a significant number of UNECE countries are planning or at least considering the adoption of innovative census technologies, particularly for data collection. They include in particular the Internet response option, which in some countries will be the main enumeration method. Many countries are also working on innovations that will allow geo-referencing census data, making use of digitized maps and GPS.

In this session, countries will discuss their plans for using innovative technology the 2020 census round. The results of tests, when available, will be presented, so that the experiences of single countries will be discussed and possibly compared with those from other countries.

4. Evaluating the census and measuring data quality

No census is perfect and, even though all possible efforts are made to minimise the impact of different types of errors on the census results, it has to be recognised that some errors will always be present. For this reason, it is very important to plan and implement a comprehensive census quality evaluation program. The objective should be the assessment of coverage and content errors, but also of other dimensions of quality. Countries may also want to set up targets for data accuracy and other quality dimensions, taking into account the results of previous censuses, users' needs, budget implications, and possibly other factors.

The results of the evaluation should be disseminated together with the census data to give users the most complete information about census results. For traditional censuses, evaluation methodologies based on Post-Enumeration Surveys are normally adopted, in particular to estimate the coverage error. For other census approaches, other methodologies can be adopted, based for instance on sample surveys or other sources used as benchmark. It is expected that countries will share information in this session on their plans for census quality evaluation, in particular with reference to alternative census methodologies.

5. Meeting users' needs

One of the challenges for the census is to try to satisfy as much as possible user requirements, taking into account resource limitations and other constraints. It is therefore very important for census planners to know who the census users are, to communicate with them to understand their needs, and to involve them in the various stages of the census process, from the content development to the dissemination phase.

In this session, countries will exchange their experiences with census users, and present good practices that could be followed by other countries, for instance with regard to the inclusion in the census of emerging topics. The session will also provide the opportunity to invite selected users of census data who may share their experiences and make suggestions on what they would like from the census.

6. Production and dissemination of geo-referenced census data

Over the last years, in most countries, the demand for geo-referenced census data has increased significantly. At the same time, the technology available to produce and disseminate geo-referenced statistical data has improved rapidly, and the costs have often decreased, making this technology relatively affordable for an increasing number of countries.

The increasing importance of geo-referenced census data is reflected in the inclusion in the CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round (for the first time) of the topic "population grid", based on one square kilometre grid cells. Although this is a derived non-core topic, countries are urged to consider adopting the use of grid square data (for EU census, grid referenced statistics is considered a priority).

Some countries have already accumulated experience in producing and disseminating grid or other geo-referenced statistics as outputs of their censuses, while others still have limited experience. The session will provide an opportunity to exchange experiences, presents results, discuss opportunities and challenges.

7. Cooperation models among countries

Cooperation at the international level between NSIs is important and useful for population and housing censuses as in all statistical areas. Many countries have recently developed alternative methodologies and technologies, with the objective to increase efficiency and reduce costs. Countries sharing their experiences with other countries can often provide useful information on lessons learned, best practices, requirements and the implications of different innovative methodologies and technologies on census planning, implementation, and data quality.

In addition to expert meetings and other initiatives promoted by international organizations, bilateral and multilateral cooperation among NSIs plays a fundamental role. This session will be dedicated to discuss some examples of frameworks and tools for bilateral and multilateral cooperation among NSIs, and collect feedback on how to further improve cooperation.

8. Integration between census and social surveys

As noted above, many countries in the UNECE region have moved or are moving towards census methodologies based on registers and administrative data, to improve the cost-effectiveness of the census, and to produce at least partial updates more frequently than every ten years. As part of this transition, the census is more and more integrated with the other statistical production of NSOs, in particular with annual demographic statistics and social surveys. This change has significant implications in many areas, including the organization of the various surveys, the concepts, definitions and classifications adopted, and the outputs produced.

In this session, participants are expected to discuss experiences with regard to integration between censuses and population estimates and social surveys carried out by NSIs.

9. Sustainable Development Goals' needs and censuses

In September 2015, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and pledged to pursue 17 Sustainable Development Goals [SDG] and 169 targets to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice and address climate change within 15 years.

As part of this process, countries are expected to monitor and report on some 232 indicators, using various sources including censuses, household surveys, and administrative data. In this session, countries will be able to discuss about opportunities and challenges associated with the use of data from the census to produce SDG indicators.

10. Future work

In this session, the plans for future work in the UNECE region to support countries in the implementation of the CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round will be presented and discussed.

11. Other business

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