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**UNITED NATIONS**  
**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**  
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

**STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE**  
**EUROPEAN UNION (EUROSTAT)**

**Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses**  
Geneva, Switzerland, 4-6 October 2017

## INFORMATION NOTE

The **meeting** will be held in room VII at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland.  
It will start at 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 4 October 2017  
and finish on Friday, 6 October by 5.30 p.m.

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and Eurostat are jointly organizing a Meeting of the Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses on 4-6 October 2017. The Meeting will be held in room VII (3rd floor, nearest entrance doors are A17 and C6) at the Palais des Nations, Avenue de la Paix 8, Geneva.
2. Immediately before the Meeting, on 2-3 October, UNECE will organize a Workshop on Population and Housing Censuses for countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, in cooperation with the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CISSTAT).

### II. PURPOSE

3. The main purpose of the meeting is to discuss about plans and preparations for the 2020 round of censuses, including methodological and technological aspects, and issues related to the implementation of the new Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing (the recommendations are available in English, Russian and French here: <http://www.unece.org/stats/census.html>). The Meeting is organized under the CES work programme on population and housing censuses.
4. The target audience of the Meeting includes census managers and experts responsible for various aspects of census planning and management in national statistical offices and census agencies.

### III. PROGRAMME

5. The work programme of the meeting will consist of all or part of the substantive topics presented below. The agenda will be prepared before the meeting taking into account the papers contributed by meeting participants. The agenda and other documents will be posted on the meeting's web page at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=43939#/>

- A. Innovations in census methodology and use of new data sources (including enumeration of hard-to-count groups)
- B. Innovations in census technology
- C. Cost-effectiveness of censuses
- D. Evaluating the census and measuring data quality (including setting targets for data accuracy and other quality dimensions)
- E. Meeting users' needs (including: emerging topics, disseminating anonymised microdata samples, statistical disclosure control)
- F. Production and dissemination of geo-referenced census data
- G. Challenges in complying with CES Recommendations for 2020 census round
- H. Cooperation models among countries
- I. Integration between census and social surveys
- J. SDG's needs and censuses

6. Explanatory notes on the above topics are provided below.

#### **A. Innovations in census methodology and use of new data sources (including enumeration of hard-to-count groups)**

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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"*.

## **B. Innovations in census technology**

11. 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.

12. 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.

## **C. Cost-effectiveness of censuses**

13. In most countries, population and housing censuses have to be conducted with limited budget since NSIs and census agencies face increasing financial constraints. This represents a challenge in particular when the census methodology adopted requires direct field data collection, which is very expensive. In these countries, special measures are often taken to improve the enumeration of specific hard-to-count population groups, resulting in additional costs.

14. To convince the government or another funder to allocate resources, census managers must, on the one hand, accurately assess and minimize the expected census costs, and on the other hand, provide detailed information about the benefits of the census, which may include estimates of its financial value.

15. In assessing the census costs, consideration is normally given to the costs of the previous census (unless a significantly different methodology is adopted), taking into account inflation and other relevant factors. Assessing the census costs is particularly difficult when a new methodology is adopted, which may result for instance in the reduction of costs for direct field collection, and in the increase of costs for technology and communication.

16. In this session countries are expected to share experiences and/or challenges with assessing the costs and benefits of censuses, in particular in the framework of reducing census budgets, and in maximizing their cost-effectiveness.

## **D. Evaluating the census and measuring data quality (including setting targets for data accuracy and other quality dimensions)**

17. 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.

18. 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.

#### **E. Meeting users' needs (including: emerging topics, disseminating anonymised microdata samples, statistical disclosure control)**

19. 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 what are their needs, and to involve them in the various stages of the census process, from the content development to the dissemination phase.

20. 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.

#### **F. Production and dissemination of geo-referenced census data**

21. 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.

22. 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).

23. 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.

#### **G. Challenges in complying with CES Recommendations for 2020 census round**

24. In this session, countries are expected to discuss various issues that they are facing, or expect to face in relation to planning and conducting the next census in compliance with the CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round. It can be expected that a number of issues could be faced in particular by countries that plan to use data from registers or sample surveys, although the new Recommendations have been drafted taking into account the increasing variability of census methods and data sources used by countries. For instance,

countries may discuss about approaches being developed to produce census data using the usually resident population concept when administrative data are used and more generally about using the administrative data that often do not correspond to the statistical definitions.

#### **H. Cooperation models among countries**

25. 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.

26. 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.

#### **I. Integration between census and social surveys**

27. 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.

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

#### **J. Sustainable Development Goals' needs and censuses**

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

30. 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.

#### IV. DOCUMENTATION AND LANGUAGES

31. The working languages of the meeting are English and Russian. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in these languages.
32. Participants are welcome to submit a paper for any topic on the agenda. Authors of papers submitted in Russian are encouraged to provide a short abstract in English.
33. The following deadlines and requirements apply:
- Meeting participants who intend to contribute a paper should inform the UNECE secretariat indicating the topic of the paper and attaching a short abstract) by **25 May 2017**.
  - The full final versions of papers, not exceeding 15 pages including charts, annexes and references, should be sent to the UNECE Secretariat in Word format by **22 June 2017**.
  - Presenters are encouraged to use power point presentations, and to send them to the UNECE Secretariat by **20 September 2017**.
  - All submissions should be addressed to the UNECE Secretariat, Mr. Paolo Valente, e-mail [paolo.valente@unece.org](mailto:paolo.valente@unece.org) with copy to [social.stats@unece.org](mailto:social.stats@unece.org)
34. Papers will be made available on the website of the UNECE secretariat at the following location: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=43939#/>. The documents posted on the meeting web page will not be distributed in the meeting room. Participants are encouraged to download them and bring their own copies to the meeting.

#### V. PARTICIPATION, ACCREDITATION AND REGISTRATION

35. The meeting is open to representatives of all member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Representatives of other Member States of the United Nations, specialized agencies of the United Nations, other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) may also participate in a consultative capacity, according to the terms of reference of UNECE (E/ECE/778/Rev.3, paras. 11, 12 and 13). All delegates must be accredited by the competent authority of their country or international organization.
36. All participants should register by **1 September 2017** (participants funded by UNECE by 7 August) by completing the online registration for the
- Expert Meeting: <https://www2.unece.org/uncdb/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=87SxbR>
- Workshop: <https://www2.unece.org/uncdb/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=Xs27w0>
37. The online meeting registration guideline is available at: <https://www2.unece.org/wiki/display/OMR>.
38. All participants attending the meeting are requested to have a valid passport and, if required, a visa. Applications for visas should be made as soon as possible at the Embassy of Switzerland in the country in which the participants reside, with reference to the UNECE/Eurostat Meeting on Population and Housing Censuses. If necessary, the UNECE secretariat can provide a letter to facilitate obtaining a visa. Please indicate this need on the registration form or contact the Secretariat at [social.stats@unece.org](mailto:social.stats@unece.org).

## **VI. ACCESS TO THE PALAIS DES NATIONS AND TRANSPORT IN GENEVA**

39. Information about entering the Palais des Nations and transport in Geneva, including the free "Geneva Transport Card", are available at the following link:

<http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.html>

## **VII. ACCOMMODATION**

40. Participants are requested to make their own accommodation arrangements. The UNECE secretariat in Geneva is not in a position to provide such services to participants. Participants are advised to book hotel accommodation well in advance of the meeting since available rooms may be limited due to other meetings and events taking place in Geneva during the month of September. Maps of Geneva and list of hotels are available on the following website: <https://www.geneve.com/en/>

Main hotels close to the Palais des Nations:

- The closest hotel is the 5-Star Intercontinental.
- There are several three-star and four-star hotels near Cornavin, the main train station. These hotels are moderate in price and are 10 minutes by bus or tram and 25-30 minutes on foot from the Palais des Nations. Examples include: Ibis Genève Centre Nations, Eden, Manotel, Mon Repos, des Alpes, International and Terminus, Montana, Savoy, Suisse, and Windsor.

## **VIII. WEATHER**

41. The weather in Geneva in October is pleasant, although it can be relatively cold and it may rain. The average day temperature is 11°C. You can check the weather forecast at the local website: <http://www.meteoswiss.admin.ch/home.html?tab=overview>. The conference room where the meeting will be held is air-conditioned and the temperature is maintained in the range of 20-22°C.

## **IX. CURRENCY**

42. The exchange rate of the euro and the Swiss franc is now around 1.08 francs per 1 euro and is subject to daily market fluctuations. For conversion rate, please consult <http://www.ubs.com/global/en/bcqv/calculator.html>. Currency exchange facilities are available in the city centre and at the UBS bank branch at Palais des Nations, located on the ground floor of C building (door C6). It is open from 08:30 to 16:30, with no lunch break, from Monday to Friday.

## X. INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

### UNECE Secretariat

Mr. Paolo Valente  
Statistician  
Social and Demographic Statistics Section  
Statistical Division  
Tel: +41 22 917 3306  
E-mail: [paolo.valente@unece.org](mailto:paolo.valente@unece.org)

Ms. France Font-Verot  
Programme Assistant  
Social and Demographic Statistics Section  
Statistical Division  
Tel: +41 22 917 1204  
E-mail: [social.stats@unece.org](mailto:social.stats@unece.org)

### Map of the United Nations premises in Geneva

(Room/Salle VII, 3rd floor, nearest entrances Door A17 and Door C6)

