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23 July 2020

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

Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses: online meetings

- 29 September, 09:00-12:00 CEST (focus on Eastern Europe, the Caucasus & Central Asia)
- 30 September and 1 October 2020, 14:00-17:00 CEST (Geneva time)

Submit abstract: bit.ly/AbstractUNECECensus2020 by Friday 28 August
Register: bit.ly/RegisterUNECECensus2020 by Friday 18 September

INVITATION TO REGISTER AND CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

I. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

1. As countries grapple with the impacts on their censuses of Covid-related restrictions on travel, personal interaction and economic activity, the need for international exchange is greater than ever. Countries across the region are engaged in the final preparations for, or already conducting, their censuses for the 2020 round. Some have had to postpone their census enumeration, while others have had to make significant changes to their preparatory activities and plans. Great uncertainty about the future course of the pandemic means that census plans for 2021 and beyond are evolving rapidly to account for the likelihood of new or continued restrictions.
2. In light of these restrictions on travel and health protection measures, a physical meeting of the Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses is postponed until further notice. In the intervening period until such a meeting can take place, therefore, UNECE is convening online meetings to provide census managers and others involved in the design, management and conduct of censuses with a platform to exchange current situations and plans.
3. Two online events will take place over three days:
 - a. **Population and housing censuses in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA)**
Tuesday 29 September, 09:00-12:00 CEST (Geneva time)
(10:00-13:00 Chisinau/Kyiv/Minsk/Moscow, 11:00-14:00 Tbilisi/Yerevan, 12:00-15:00 Ashgabat/Tashkent/Dushanbe, 13:00-16:00 Bishkek/Nursultan).
 - b. **Population and Housing Censuses and the Covid Pandemic**
Wednesday 30 September & Thursday 1 October, 14:00-17:00 CEST (Geneva time).



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II. PARTICIPATION

4. The principal target audience is census managers and experts responsible for all aspects of census planning and management in national statistical offices, as well as census experts in international organizations. Representatives of academia, civil society and other individuals may also register and will be able to participate subject to available capacity.
5. Only registered participants will be able to connect to the meetings. To register please complete the online registration form at bit.ly/RegisterUNECECensus2020 by Friday 18 September 2020. Connection links and instructions for joining the events will be sent out by email approximately one week before the meetings.
6. The working languages of the meetings are English and Russian. The organizers expect to provide simultaneous interpretation in these languages. Abstracts should be submitted and presentations delivered in English or Russian only.

III. CONTRIBUTIONS

7. *No written papers are requested.* The events will consist of short presentations (5-7 minutes, maximum 5 slides) followed by facilitated discussions. You may signal your wish to give a presentation during the events by submitting an abstract of approximately 300 words outlining your proposed contribution. Abstracts should be submitted in English or Russian via the online form at bit.ly/AbstractUNECECensus2020 by Friday 28 August 2020.

Abstracts for all sessions should aim to be forward-looking with the goal of providing information that may be useful for others: e.g. highlighting findings or experiences that could offer valuable lessons learned; and/or showing how these experiences will inform future approaches.

8. The limited time available for the meetings means that only a selection of abstracts received will be accepted for presentation at the meeting. The CES Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses will select the abstracts to be presented. Selected presenters will be given full instructions and deadlines for preparing their presentations and for the conduct of the online event. All abstracts received will be made available on the meeting website and may be used to inform future online discussions (see section V).



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IV. THEMES

A. Exchange of experience among EECCA countries (29 September)

9. Participants from EECCA countries are invited to present a brief update on their census operations, with particular emphasis on any postponement or other significant change in plans arising from the Covid pandemic. Those with censuses in 2020 will be asked to elaborate on the mitigation measures planned or implemented to ensure successful enumeration.

B. Census operations in the context of the Covid crisis

10. Censuses are at the heart of national official statistics. Their importance is clearer than ever as countries strive to tackle the Covid pandemic. The need for baseline data on the distribution of population, its age and sex structure and the areas of concentration of vulnerable groups is plain to see. Yet the conduct of censuses has been put at great risk by the spread of the virus and the widespread restrictions on movement and economic activity. With censuses planned or taking place in 2020 or 2021 in most of the UNECE region, the impacts are profound. This session will examine these impacts, taking a forward-looking view to focus on what participants can learn from one-another for successfully carrying out forthcoming censuses, rather than a review of challenges already experienced and overcome. Abstracts for this session could consider one or more of the following guiding questions:
 - Are you making significant changes to your operations? (delayed enumeration, changes in mode or mode mix, changes in enumeration practices, increased use of administrative data sources, etc.)
 - How are you mitigating against the high degree of uncertainty in the coming months? (multiple scenarios, assuming and planning for worst-case scenario etc.)
 - What impacts on data quality do you foresee and how do you plan to minimize any negative impacts?
 - What changes are you making in your census communications strategies to maintain public support, reassure the public about the safety of census operations, or capitalize on bolstered interest in statistics?

C. First results and lessons learned from censuses of the 2020 round

11. Countries which have already conducted their census are invited to share their experiences, lessons learned and any preliminary results that may be of interest to the international community. Abstracts may focus either on Covid-related experiences or on other aspects.

V. FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERACTION

12. Submitted abstracts may reveal numerous themes meriting discussion, which cannot all be covered in the course of the online meetings. The UNECE secretariat will therefore organize discussion platforms on additional themes as follow-up to the online events. Participants will be informed of the details of these in due course.