

**UN STATISTICAL COMMISSION and
UN ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

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

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Joint ECE-EUROSTAT Work Session on Population and Housing Censuses
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THE ROLE OF UNITED NATIONS STATISTICS DIVISION IN SUPPORT OF CENSUS ACTIVITIES

Note by the United Nations Statistics Division

1. The major role of the United Nations' World Population and Housing Census Programme in support of censuses has been in the development and setting of guidelines and international standards to facilitate the collection and production of population and housing statistics and also to promote international comparability of such statistics. The census programme of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) is designed with the primary goal of assisting countries in planning and carrying out improved, timely and cost effective censuses. This goal has been addressed through: (i) the preparation of reference and training materials and (ii) the provision of technical assistance services, and (iii) census capability building.
2. The most important methodological publication of the United Nations on censuses is the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*. This publication has been supplemented by manuals and handbooks either to elaborate on issues dealt with in the *Principles and Recommendations* or as updates. A handbook on international migration and on designing household sample surveys will be ready by 2004. Several technical documents are planned for the next 3 to 4 years.
3. As part of its census capability building activity, UNSD has provided technical assistance to many countries in the form of international, regional and sub-regional training workshops in the past years. UNSD has found that forming partnership with national statistical offices (such as the US Bureau of the Census and Australian Bureau of Statistics) in the training exercises to be effective. UNSD will continue to play a critical role in supporting countries build capabilities in implementing successful census programmes.

4. Advisory services have been undertaken by UNSD upon the request of countries to provide technical support in conducting of censuses. Currently UNSD is assisting countries under difficult situations, such as Afghanistan and Timor-Leste, in their preparation of national population and housing census.

5. Two major meetings are planned for 2003 and 2004. The first is the review of the United Nations Demographic Yearbook scheduled for November 2003 and the second a census symposium, which is tentatively scheduled for August 2004. The census symposium was requested by the 34th session of the Statistical Commission as a follow-up to the census symposium held in August 2001 in New York (the proceedings are available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/census/index.htm>). The meeting will assess the 2000 round of census (1995-2004) activities and identify issues and emerging problems from the current round of censuses and seek solutions that would serve to guide countries in census planning during the 2010 census round (2005-2014).

6. In light of the Commission's recommendations UNSD is developing its work programme and strategies to accomplish the task set by the Commission. The inputs of the 2004 symposium in crystallizing the UNSD's response to the actions taken by the Commission into workable outputs will be valuable and will help UNSD in developing a realistic work programme based on countries' needs. In conclusion, UNSD will be delighted to include key issues this Work Session would like addressed at the forth-coming symposium.
