



Regional Workshop on the Use of Census Data for Development Planning and Scientific Research in Arab Countries

Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco

1-3 October 2019

Information Note

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Population and housing censuses provide basic information for development planning, including the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, which includes data on population size, growth, distribution, geographic and spatial location, various characteristics, etc. The censuses also provide data on various statistical areas related to population and housing, disaggregated by small geographical regions and population groups and minorities as well as various demographic and social characteristics such as sex, age, education, migration, labor force and persons with disabilities. In recent decades, most countries have had at least one population census.

Within the framework of the 2020 round of Population and Housing Census, ESCWA organized, in cooperation with the UNFPA Regional Office, the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS) and the Arab Statistical Offices, a series of meetings and workshops on methodologies and methods used for population censuses, including combined and register-based methodologies, in addition to the use of modern technology at all stages of the census, and the transfer of experiences to countries planning to conduct population and housing censuses and to develop alternative methods in countries where censuses are hindered. ESCWA has published four methodological studies as outcomes of the above-mentioned meetings: 1) use of administrative registers in population and housing censuses; 2) undertaking census using register-based and combined methodologies; 3) dissemination of data using emerging approaches; and 4) methods of collecting census data using self-enumeration¹.

In the Arab region, Jordan, the Emirates of Sharjah and Ajman in the United Arab Emirates, the Arab Republic of Egypt and the State of Palestine have undertaken censuses using technology, whereas other countries such as Sudan, Algeria, Iraq and Syria are intensively involved in the planning and preparation of the coming census. Noting that the Gulf Cooperation Council countries are planning to use administrative registers in collecting census items/subjects in 2020 round. While the implementation of censuses in other countries such as Yemen, Libya, Somalia and Lebanon remains subject to security and political conditions.

¹ These studies can be found on the ESCWA Population and Housing Census page: <https://www.unescwa.org/sub-site/arab-population-housing-censuses>

Countries that have conducted censuses, analyze and disseminate the data and make it available to users using emerging approaches and geographic information systems, as well as make micro data available for public use and scientific research. Census data are used in several areas, such as the formulation of public policies and plans, and sectoral plans such as education, health, housing, employment, elderly issues, youth and persons with difficulties, particularly in the processing of voter registers in municipal and presidential elections. Census data are also used to conduct research and scientific studies on social and economic issues such as family composition, housing conditions, marriage, divorce, aging, youth, migration and refugees at the country level or at the small geographical area. It is essential to make use of the data provided by censuses to produce relevant sustainable development indicators.

In line with the regional efforts in the area of population and housing censuses, and in response to the recommendations of the previous meetings of the Population and Housing Census Task Force of the ESCWA member countries, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in cooperation with the UNFPA Regional Office and the High Commissioner for Planning in the Kingdom of Morocco, is organizing a “regional workshop on the use of census data for development planning and scientific research in the Arab countries”, in Rabat from 1 to 3 October 2019.

In this context, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the UNFPA Regional Office are presenting research papers and studies on the use of census data in scientific research, in producing relevant sustainable development indicators at the level of small communities to benefit from participants’ recommendations to improve those studies from the viewpoints of data producers (statistical offices) and data users (relevant ministries and government agencies or community of scientific researchers) in order to maximize the use of census data and enhance cooperation between data producers and users.

I- Objectives

The regional workshop aims to achieve the following:

- review the different ways of census data dissemination and usage in development planning;
- highlight the importance of communication of census data between producers and users;
- highlight the role of population and housing censuses in providing indicators of the 2030 sustainable development agenda;
- discuss how to use individual census data in the process of research and planning.

Expected outcomes

- To achieve a common and better understanding of the adoption of new technologies in the dissemination, reporting and use of population and housing censuses, and of the importance of the effective use of these technologies to maximize the benefits of such investment;
- To raise awareness of the importance of communicating the data and outputs of population and housing censuses, and work on preparing strategies for this;
- To bring together the views of data producers and users on the importance of using census data in the field of development planning and scientific research, and providing part of the relevant sustainable development indicators at the level of small clusters/areas.

II- Participants

The workshop's participants are directors of population and housing censuses from national statistical offices that recently conducted censuses and national experts in the areas of planning, education, health, migration and scientific research. Representatives from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and its Regional Office for Arab States, experts from the United Nations Human Settlements Program (Habitat) and experts from other international and regional organizations will also attend the workshop.

III- Main areas of discussion

The workshop consists of the following topics related to the dissemination and use of census data:

- dissemination and communication of census data with users;
- use of census data in policies and planning;
- use of census data in scientific research namely, projections, migration and refugee, family and education;
- use of census data in housing plans;
- making census data available for public use and conducting relevant scientific research such as migration data extraction from published individual data;
- use of data to calculate sustainable development indicators at the level of small clusters/areas and the use of geographic information systems in their presentation.

IV- Documents

- Preliminary version of studies on the use of census data in the production of sustainable development indicators at the level of small clusters/areas;
- Expert reports;
- Countries' presentations.

V- Language

The meeting will be in Arabic and English and there will be simultaneous interpretation.

VI- Venue and time of the meeting

The meeting will be held during the period 1-3 October 2019 at the Golden Tulip Farah Rabat Hotel, Kingdom of Morocco.

VII- Administrative arrangements

- Participants are required to apply for a visa to the Kingdom of Morocco (for those who need it);
- Participants are requested to stay at the hotel where the venue of the meeting for logistical reasons;
- ESCWA will make the necessary administrative and logistical arrangements. For further information on logistical and administrative matters, please contact Ms. Zeina Sinno on e-mail: sinnoz@un.org.

VIII- For further information, contact:

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