



# 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme (2005 - 2014) Newsletter

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## International seminar on population and housing censuses held in Seoul, Republic of Korea

The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and Statistics Korea (KOSTAT) organized the International Seminar on Population and Housing Censuses: Beyond the 2010 Round in Seoul, Republic of Korea from 27 to 29 November 2012. The International Seminar was attended by over 60 participants from 21 countries.

The purpose of the International Seminar was to provide a discussion forum for census experts to share experiences and lessons learned from censuses conducted during the 2010 round. The International Seminar covered the following issues (i) emerging methodologies for the census, (ii) use of modern technologies in census operations, (iii) strategies for managing census costs, and (iv) demands for and provision of census micro data. The International Seminar also gave insights about the likely future of census taking.

The International Seminar was inaugurated with opening remarks by Mr. Ki-Jong Woo, Commissioner of KOSTAT and Ms. Keiko Osaki-Tomita, Chief of the Demographic and Social Statistics Branch at UNSD. In his opening remarks, Mr. Ki-Jong Woo welcomed the participants to the International Seminar and expressed his gratitude to UNSD for the collaboration on the event. Mr. Woo highlighted the importance of census information for monitoring of socio-economic situations in countries, but also pointed out the fact that today's population and housing censuses face challenges including a deteriorating survey environment, the advancement of information and communication technologies, and the demand for cost efficient and timely data entry, processing and dissemination. He went on to say that those in charge of censuses are continuously asked to develop measures to over-



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come these challenges. He stresses that these challenges could be overcome, if countries work together, share lessons learned and thoroughly look for solutions.

Ms. Keiko Osaki-Tomita welcomed the participants and pointed out that the presence at the International Seminar of so many leading statisticians and census experts from various parts of the world proved their continuing interest in the importance of population and housing censuses as a statistical activity and as an indispensable source of data for effective development planning. She also commended the long-standing collaboration between UNSD and KOSTAT. Ms. Osaki-Tomita informed the participants about the role of UNSD as the secretariat of the decennial World Population and Housing Census Programme which includes monitoring of implementation of population and housing censuses world wide. She also informed the audience about UNSD's activities which are aimed at assisting countries to effectively plan and conduct their national censuses, including through the publication of methodological guidelines and organization of workshops and seminars on different aspects of the census process.

Ms. Osaki-Tomita concluded by stating that as the 2010 round of population and housing censuses comes close to an end, it is time to review the experiences of the round, by not only sharing successes, but also by addressing challenges faced, and even by identifying failures openly. She stressed that the critical assessment of the current census round will not only broaden our knowledge base, but also will form crucial inputs into the next census round as the preparation for the 2020 round of World Census Programme should build on achievements in the current round and lessons learned.

The keynote speech of the Seminar was delivered by Ms. Connie Graziadei, Assistant Chief Statistician at Statistics Canada. The keynote address demonstrated how census taking has evolved from simple head counts to the current more complex and costly undertakings utilizing multiple data sources and modes of enumeration, but facing ever declining public interest to participate. The address pointed out the necessity of censuses of the future to be innovative and to adapt to changes in society while being cost effective and producing quality data.

Ms. Graziadei concluded by stressing on the need to produce high-quality data that respects countries' legislative frameworks, that is relevant to their users and operations that are delivered in the most cost effective way possible. She stressed, however, that as countries continue to introduce innovations in technology and improve collection methods to increase the efficiency of conducting a census, new challenges will emerge. As we move forward, Ms. Graziadei mentioned, we will need to continue to focus on data quality, respondent burden, and the demand for more



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frequent information. She also reiterated that as societies evolve, we are also faced with challenges regarding privacy and decreasing participation in the census.

At the end of the International Seminar, the participants came up with the following conclusions:

(a) In a rapidly changing world, censuses have to adapt and change constantly in order to respond to the new reality of modern society. Participants, however, reaffirmed that the fundamental values of population and housing censuses remained unchanged. Population and housing censuses are unique sources of data that allow counting all individuals in a country and collecting their characteristics at a given point in time. Censuses also enable to analyze the situation at lower geographical levels and for small population groups. What is expected of modern censuses is to conduct them to produce quality statistics and in a cost-effective manner. The census as an evolving and dynamic concept has implications for UN guidelines on the definition of a census, which participants recognized should be critically re-examined and possibly revised to reflect current realities in terms of country legislative requirements.

(b) Participants emphasized that it is of critical importance to assess, not only census data themselves, but also all processes of census taking. It is recommended that such an evaluation be an integral part of the census plan, and be conducted soon after each process of the census. Evaluation should be carried out also when data are taken from administrative sources.

(c) Increasingly, countries are seeking possibilities of using administrative and register data and also survey data to obtain socio-demographic information. While worth pursuing the possibility, countries should exercise caution and should adequately test these new census methodologies before they are implemented. It is necessary to thoroughly check and evaluate the quality of the data and compatibility of concepts among the sources to be used. The checking and evaluation is not a one-time event but should be continuous. Participants were also cognizant of the fact that the establishment of an operational registration system takes a long time. Furthermore, establishment of the requisite infrastructure and capacity for such a system, as well as its maintenance may require significant resources. It is important to note, however, that there are differences among countries regarding the current completeness and quality of their administrative registers and that the cautions above do not equally apply to all.

(d) Considering the options to use registers and administrative records to generate population statistics, several challenges were identified in linking different registers or combining them with data from other sources such as surveys. Statistical and census offices normally rely on other administrative organizations for the maintaining and updating of registers and administrative records. Furthermore, the registers and administrative records are not explicitly set up for statistical purposes. Participants emphasized that collaboration between different offices needs to be forged and ensured to allow exchanges of data, for instance, by strengthening and using legal provisions. In this connection, participants recommended to have a meeting bringing together census experts and registration offices.

(e) User's needs for census data change over time. Participants pointed out that although countries have a prerogative to choose topics relevant to them, the inclusions of topics to investigate emerging issues should be critically examined in order not to unduly overburden the census questionnaire. In this connection, it was proposed that countries consider including in their census questionnaires primarily basic core census topics.

(f) Traditional censuses are increasingly seen as costly and often inefficient. Participants identified various reasons/factors for the increase in census costs, including high cost for field operations, use of new technologies, high printing costs, translation of questionnaire into different languages, and so on. Some participating countries shared their experiences in the way to improve the cost effectiveness of the census. The examples of such included outsourcing some of the processes, rigorous procurement processes, continuous monitoring of commercial contractors, strong project management, effective census campaigns, electronic data capture/processing/archiving, moving to paperless products (web dissemination), and so on.

(g) During the 2010 round of censuses, countries have continued to build on the experiences of the 2000 round in use of modern technologies for census operations and have also introduced new technologies. The participants agreed that such application of modern technologies has led to better management of census processes, resulting in better data quality, timely dissemination, and better utilization of census results. While the use of some technologies such as SMS for monitoring of field operations are effective, participants cautioned that adequate safeguards are required to mitigate unauthorized access to the information and political pressure for premature release of data.

(h) Participants recognized that the Internet is increasingly used for census enumeration, often offered as an alternative to the traditional filling of paper questionnaires. Many countries that offer an option for respondents to respond by Internet reported a high up-take rate. The response rate through the Internet varies by socio-economic character-

## International seminar on population and housing censuses held in Seoul, Republic of Korea *(continued from page 3)*

istics of respondents. To further improve response rates through the Internet, countries should actively promote its use as the preferred mode for participants to use to participate in the census.

(i) Technology for census data dissemination has improved over time. While the use of such technology has enhanced data utilization, participants pointed out that there is a challenge for harnessing of these technologies at grass root level. Participants also stressed that countries should put in place a strategy for marketing of census information as part of the data utilization plan. Furthermore, in view of growing demands for census micro data, it is important to ensure the confidentiality of data through anonymization process or statistical measures, in order to maintain the trust of the general public.

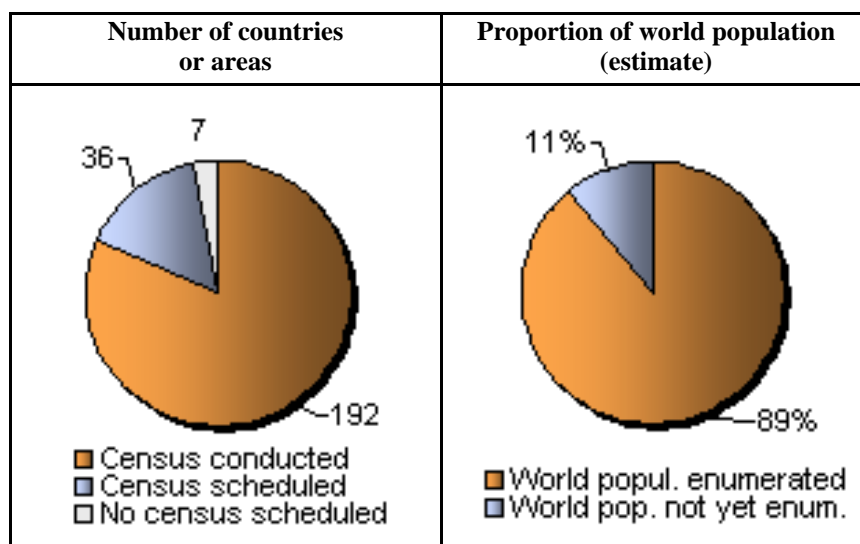


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More information and presentations made at the International Seminar are available on UNSD's website: [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/wshops/Korea/2012/list\\_of\\_docs.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/wshops/Korea/2012/list_of_docs.htm)

## Update on implementation of 2010 round of population and housing censuses

A total of 192 countries or areas have conducted a population and housing census thus far in the 2010 census round, according to information available to UNSD as at the beginning of November 2012. These censuses have enumerated an estimated 89 per cent of the world's population. By the end of 2012, it is expected that about 92 per cent of the world's population would be counted in a census. About 11 countries or areas have scheduled to conduct a census in 2013 while another 9 are expected to hold a census in 2014. By the end of the census round in 2014, it is estimated that close to 96 per cent of the world's population would have been counted. A census has not been scheduled in 7 countries or areas for the 2010 round.



Under the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme, UNSD monitors and publishes information on the progress being made by countries in conducting population and housing censuses in the 2010 round. For more information on progress in implementation of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses, see: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/census2010.htm>

## Workshops on population projections conducted for English- and French-speaking African countries



Workshop on Population Projections for English-speaking African Countries, Pretoria, 29 October–2 November 2012

The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) organized two workshops on population projections for English- and French-speaking African countries. The purpose of the workshops was to provide training to participating countries on how to generate population projections using census data. The participants also learned about available software packages for generating population projections. The workshops also drew participants' attention to the necessary preparatory work before undertaking the population projections.

The workshop for French-speaking African countries was organized in collaboration with the High Commission for Planning, Government of Morocco. The workshop, which took place from 10 to 14 September 2012 in Rabat, Morocco was attended by 16 statisticians and demographers from 11 countries. The workshop for English-speaking African countries was held in Pretoria, South Africa, in the period 29 October–2 November 2012.

The workshop was organized in collaboration with Statistics South Africa and was attended by 34 statisticians and demographers from 23 countries.

More information on the workshops including presentations and materials used are available on the UNSD website: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/cwp2010/docs.htm>



Workshop on Population Projections for English-speaking African Countries  
Pretoria, 29 October–2 November 2012

## UNSD conducted a regional workshop on CensusInfo for Dutch-speaking Caribbean countries

The United Nations Regional Workshop on CensusInfo for Dutch-speaking Caribbean Countries took place in Oranjestad, Aruba, from 26 to 30 November 2012. The workshop was formally opened in the presence of Mr. Martijn Balkestein, Director, Central Bureau of Statistics of Aruba. The workshop provided 15 participants—mostly census managers, senior census practitioners responsible for the dissemination of census data and IT personnel from the national statistics offices of Aruba, Curacao, Sint Maarten and Suriname—with the conceptual and technical knowledge to implement a CensusInfo adaptation for disseminating census results. The training was undertaken as part of the activities under the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses to enhance the capacity of countries to disseminate census results timely, fully and effectively.

The workshop demonstrated CensusInfo's potential as a platform for disseminating census data at any geographical level. Over the course of the workshop the participants learned about the data structure underlying the CensusInfo database system and its two components: the User Interface and the Database Administration applications. Participants learned various methods for searching data and generating various presentation objects including tables, graphs, maps and standard profile reports. Topics of the Data Administration application covered during the workshop included: creating a CensusInfo template, importing database elements from the CensusInfo Global Registry, integrating maps into the template/database, various methods of data import, management of metadata, customization of the database for country specific context, and other data administration functions. The workshop sessions included hands-on training on using the CensusInfo User Interface and Database Administration applications.

CensusInfo is a software package developed by the United Nations Statistics Division in partnership with UNICEF and UNFPA to help countries disseminate their census data on CD-ROM and on the web. It was officially launched at the United Nations Statistical Commission on 23 February 2009 and is distributed royalty-free. More information on CensusInfo is available at the website dedicated to its promotion: <http://www.censusinfo.net>



Workshop on CensusInfo for Dutch-speaking Caribbean Countries  
Oranjestad, Aruba, 26-30 November 2012

## Workshop on census data evaluation held for English-speaking African countries

The United Nations Sub-regional Workshop on Evaluation of Census Data took place in Kampala, Uganda, from 12 to 16 November 2012. The workshop was organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) in collaboration with the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS). It was attended by 28 representatives from the national statistical offices of 20 English-speaking countries in Africa. The purpose of the workshop was to strengthen the technical capacity of the participating countries to evaluate the quality of census data based on the application of demographic techniques and through comparisons with other data sources such as previous censuses, sample surveys, and administrative registers. The workshop also provided a forum for countries to discuss possible types of errors in census data based on their experiences and lessons learned.

The workshop opened with a statement by H.E. Mr. John B. Male-Mukasa, Executive Director of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics. Mr. Male-Musaka said that the interest in the workshop demonstrated the extent to which the “African statistical fraternity” recognizes the importance of population and housing censuses. He emphasized the opportunity afforded to the participants to study the evaluation of the quality, reliability and comparability of census data, as well as to network with representatives from other NSOs in Africa.

On behalf of UNSD, Mr. Srdjan Mrkic, Chief of the Demographic Statistics Section, made opening remarks in which he outlined the significance of census statistics for assessing the overall social and economic development of a nation. He noted the critical importance to provide as precise as possible assessment of the reliability and accuracy of census data as it represents a crucial input for data users. While a number of techniques used for assessing the quality of census statistics have been elaborated, including the post enumeration survey, Mr. Mrkic noted that this workshop focused on demographic techniques used for that purpose. Mr. Mrkic expressed appreciation to the Government of Uganda for hosting the workshop and its hospitality.

In a follow-up remark, H.E. Mr. Aston Kajara, the Minister of State for Finance of Uganda, welcomed the participants and workshop organizers. Mr. Kajara noted that quality data is the cornerstone of good government planning, and that census data is the foundation for many statistical indicators that are critical for Africa at this stage in the continent’s development. He added that there is a great need for continuous measurement of the outputs of programmes and initiatives in order to provide data-based evidence for decision-making and to promote sustainable development. Mr. Kajara concluded by stressing the importance of disseminating up-to-date census results in order to help justify the cost of the census.



Workshop on Evaluation of Census Data  
Kampala, 12-16 November 2012

## Workshop on census data evaluation held for English-speaking African countries *(continued from page 7)*

The workshop started with an introductory presentation on the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses. Technical presentations by UNSD as well as by the United Nations Population Division (UNPD) provided an overview of census evaluation methods. Topic-specific presentations were given on the evaluation of data on age and sex distribution, fertility, child mortality, adult mortality, and the evaluation of data from consecutive censuses, and socioeconomic characteristics of the population. Hands-on exercises were included with most topics to help participants better understand the tools and methods introduced in the presentations. Towards the end of the workshop, a number of countries made presentations on their respective experiences with census evaluation. The workshop concluded with a discussion on census adjustment in the context of quality assessment of census statistics.

More information on the workshop, including all of the presentations delivered, is available on the UNSD website: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/cwp2010/docs.htm>



Workshop on Evaluation of Census Data  
Kampala, 12-16 November 2012

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