



Statistical Commission for Africa
Fifth session

**Committee of Directors General of National
Statistics Offices**
Tenth session

Abidjan, 28 November-2 December 2016

Report on the 2020 round of population and housing censuses in Africa Registration

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A. Introduction

1. At its forty-third session, held from 28 February to 2 March 2012, the United Nations Statistical Commission requested the United Nations Statistics Division: (a) to prepare a comprehensive report by the end of the 2010 census round on the implementation of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme, as well as a timetable for the development of the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme, including the revision of the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses; and (b) to prepare by 2015 a draft resolution on the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme for approval by the Commission and endorsement by the Economic and Social Council. As a follow-up to this request, the Statistics Division reported on 2010 census round activities and prepared a draft resolution on the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme covering the period from 2015 to 2024. On 10 June 2015 the Economic and Social Council adopted the resolution on the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme (see annex).

2. In the resolution, the Council urged Member States to conduct at least one census during the round, taking into account international and regional

recommendations. It underscored the need to set quality standards to ensure reliable and accurate results. It emphasized the importance of the Programme to the Sustainable Development Goals, and requested the Division to develop statistical standards, methods and guidelines and to monitor the implementation of the Programme. The Council encouraged the development of international methodological guidelines based on national best practices in census-taking. Countries were advised to conduct a review of their various national experiences as far as census undertakings were concerned, in preparation for the development of international standards.

3. In May 2013 the Division conducted a worldwide survey on desirable enhancements of, revisions of, additions to or deletions from the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses. There were nine questions on the survey questionnaire. Responses were received from 40 countries and some organizations. The outcome of the survey indicated what needs to change in terms of additions, expansions and deletions, also taking into account experience with the 2010 census round. Most of the respondents suggested additions related to: (a) emerging census methodologies; (b) methods of enumeration; (c) contracting out of census operations; (d) use of technology in censuses; (e) providing access to microdata; (f) data confidentiality; (g) data archiving; (h) estimation of census costs; (i) data dissemination strategies; (j) quality-setting and management; (k) census evaluation; and (l) census publicity strategy. Some countries noted that determining core topics for international use is problematic owing to regional and national differences and the availability of data from other sources on, for example, literacy and household deaths. Consequently, decisions on core topics should be carefully considered.

B. Preparations for the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme

Revision of the Africa Addendum to the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses

4. The United Nations Statistics Division has prepared a timetable for the 2020 round of population and housing censuses, including action to revise the Principles and Recommendations, as requested by the Commission. The Division established an expert group, comprising census experts from countries in both developed and developing regions, regional commissions and international and regional organizations, to review the text of the second revision of the Principles and Recommendations and propose changes and updates. The Division then prepared a draft of the third revision, which was approved by the Commission in March 2015. The Commission encouraged countries to begin the implementation of the third revision, bearing in mind the importance of setting quality standards for the conduct of censuses.

5. The third revision consists of four parts. Part One contains essential features and census methodology. Part Two covers planning, organization and management (overall census planning, strategic objective and management, units, place and time of enumeration, legal basis, financial management and administrative organization). Part Three covers census operational activities (census questionnaire content and design, building census infrastructure, mapping, census tests, living quarters and household listing, field enumeration, method of enumeration, timing and length of enumeration period, management and supervision, use of technology, data processing, evaluation of results, census products, data dissemination and utilization, documentation and census experience, archiving individual records, purpose of archiving individual records, procedures for archiving, archiving individual records and microdata and overall evaluation of the census). Part Four covers factors determining the selection of topics, the list of topics, population count, definition and specification of topics, geographical and internal migration characteristics,

international migration characteristics, household and family characteristics, demographic and social characteristics, fertility and mortality and educational, economic and agricultural characteristics.

6. At their first joint session, held in Tunis in December 2014, the Committee of Directors General of National Statistics Offices and the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa) decided that the Africa Symposium on Statistical Development should resume its focus on population and housing censuses in order to keep up in the 2020 round the momentum that had been achieved in the 2010 round. They also decided to develop an African regional programme on population and housing censuses for the coming five years that would encompass sustainable capacity development, technical support and South-South cooperation.

7. In 2008, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in consultation with African countries and other regional organizations, developed an African Addendum to the Principles and Recommendations in order to accommodate the specific needs of Africa with regard to census topics, definitions and issues pertaining to both operations and analysis. In the light of the recommendations adopted at the 10th Africa Symposium on Statistical Development, which was held in Kampala in January 2015, and also bearing in mind the new demands for data arising from the targets and indicators set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063, an expert group meeting was organized with a view to developing the first revision of the African Addendum in order to bring it into line with the Principles and Recommendations for the 2020 round.

8. This meeting took place in July 2016 in Nairobi, the main objective being to discuss the outlines of the various chapters of the first revision and to provide further inputs that could be considered in the revision process, especially with regard to conceptual and definitional changes as well as data requirements that may arise from efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. It was attended by representatives of 19 African countries (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, the Niger, Nigeria, South Africa, Swaziland, Tunisia and Zambia). The following international organizations were represented at the meeting, in addition to ECA and the United Nations Statistical Division: African Development Bank (AfDB), International Telecommunication Union, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and World Health Organization.

9. A consultant has been recruited to revise the Addendum in accordance with the decisions taken at the meeting. To ensure that it accomplishes its objectives, a dissemination strategy will need to be developed. Consideration will have to be given to presenting the revised Addendum at the fifth session of StatCom Africa.

C. 2020 census-taking activities in Africa

10. Several African countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Kenya, have already started preparations for the 2020 census round. Lesotho is the only one which has already taken a census in this round. Cameroon and Ethiopia are currently carrying out preparatory cartographic exercises. Details of planned activities in the 2020 census round are set out in the table and the figure.

Table

2020 Census round: Expected census dates by year and country

<i>Year</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Number</i>
2015	Equatorial Guinea	1
2016	Burkina Faso, Egypt, Lesotho, Sierra Leone	4
2017	Cameroon, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Swaziland	7
2018	Algeria, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Somalia, Sudan	6
2019	Chad, Djibouti, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mali, South Sudan	6
2020	Cabo Verde, Ghana, Mauritius, Seychelles, Togo, Zambia	6
2021	Botswana, Namibia, South Africa	3
2022	Burundi, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe	7
2023	Benin, Gabon, Gambia, Mauritania, Senegal	5
2024	Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Morocco, Tunisia	5
No information	Central African Republic, Comoros, Eritrea, Madagascar	4
Total		54

Source: 2020 Africa Programme on Population and Housing Censuses Decade (2015-2024) - a major source of data for monitoring and evaluating the Agenda 2063 vision and the Sustainable Development Goals (workplan for 2016-2020).

Figure
The 2020 Africa round of population and housing censuses, by expected census year
and by country



Source: 2020 Africa Programme on Population and Housing Censuses Decade (2015-2024) - a major source of data for monitoring and evaluating the Agenda 2063 vision and the Sustainable Development Goals (workplan for 2016-2020).

D. 2020 Africa Programme on Population and Housing Censuses Decade (2015 – 2024) and workplan for 2016 – 2020

11. In collaboration with key partners, ECA has developed the 2020 Africa Programme on Population and Housing Censuses Decade (2015 – 2024). A workplan for 2016 – 2020 has been prepared with the collaboration of AfDB. During the July 2016 meeting in Nairobi, representatives of AfDB, ECA and UNFPA decided that the five-year Africa census programme was already in place and reached initial agreement to work together to implement it. They indicated the need to thoroughly go through the Programme and digest it. They also agreed to bring the subject to the attention of the higher management in the three institutions, and to try to align the Programme with their institutional and other upcoming plans, even though it might not be possible to secure the necessary financial resources to implement it during the remaining months of 2016.

12. The 2020 Africa Programme on Population and Housing Censuses Decade (2015 – 2024) and the workplan for 2016 – 2020 have the following objectives: the provision of direct technical support necessary for census planning, management, data collection, processing, analysis and dissemination; the building of technical capacity for the different phases of a census operation; and support to countries in difficult circumstances in preparing to conduct population and housing censuses.

13. The project's expected accomplishments are: (a) implementation of the set of accepted international principles and recommendations governing the conduct of censuses, and tailoring of some of these international principles and recommendations to the realities of the continent; (b) conduct of a census in each African country during the period 2015 to 2024; (c) use of better methods and new technologies to increase the reliability and accessibility of statistics in a timely manner; and (d) provision of technical assistance to help countries to plan and conduct censuses, capture, process, analyse, disseminate, document and archive census data, and monitor and disseminate information on the implementation of the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme.

E. Africa Census Coordinating Committee

14. The Committee of Directors General decided at its ninth session, held in Libreville on 29 and 30 November 2015, that an Africa Census Coordinating Committee would be established at the continental level in 2016 to guide and coordinate the development and implementation of the 2020 census round. The Committee will be composed of representatives of ECA, AfDB, UNFPA and the census offices of six to eight countries representing the continent's subregions. Its terms of reference have been drafted by ECA, AfDB, UNFPA and the Africa Symposiums on Statistical Development and circulated to partner organizations for comments. The representatives of AfDB, ECA and UNFPA have agreed in principle that they will incorporate the Africa Programme on Population and Housing Census Decade or the five-year Africa census programme in their plans and seek the necessary resources to implement it, that the activities of the Programme will be coordinated by ECA and that the members of the Committee will be the African Union Commission, AfDB, ECA and UNFPA. In order to succeed, the African census programme will require the active support of member States in a working partnership with the pan-African organizations, the Africa Symposiums on Statistical Development, the regional economic communities, the United Nations Statistics Division, UNFPA and other international organizations.

F. Establishing a regional centre of excellence

15. UNFPA, ECA and AfDB have for some time been discussing the idea of establishing a regional centre of excellence that would promote and facilitate the use of efficient and effective technology in African censuses - in particular the use of handheld devices in census enumeration. The 11th African Symposium on Statistical Development, held in Libreville in November 2015, decided to “establish a working group to define criteria and scope of centres of excellence in ICT-enabled mapping and data production, analysis, dissemination and management that cater to the specific needs of countries for the successful implementation of the CRVS strategy and the 2020 round of censuses in roll-out countries in support of the Africa Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals consistent with SHaSA priorities”.

16. In furtherance of this resolution, a side event was held at the forty-seventh session of the United Nations Statistical Commission on the establishment of "Reference Centres in Censuses with Electronic Data Collection in Africa", organized by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics and UNFPA. UNFPA has signed a memorandum of understanding with the national statistical offices of Brazil, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and South Africa. It is expected that AfDB and ECA will provide catalytic support to these centres through the 2020 Africa Programme.

G. Discussion points

17. The following points are proposed for discussion at the Abidjan meeting:

- Africa Addendum to the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses
- 2020 census-taking activities in Africa
- Funding mechanisms for 2020 census-taking activities in Africa
- 2020 Africa Programme on Population and Housing Censuses Decade (2015 – 2024) and workplan for 2016 – 2020
- Regional Census Coordinating Committee
- Establishing a regional centre of excellence
- 2020 census-taking activities in Africa and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Annex

Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 10 June 2015

[on the recommendation of the Statistical Commission (E/2015/24)]

2015/10. 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 2005/13 of 22 July 2005, in which it requested the Secretary-General to implement the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme and urged Member States to carry out population and housing censuses at least once during the period from 2005 to 2014, as well as its earlier resolutions endorsing previous decennial programmes,

Noting with satisfaction the efforts made by Member States to carry out population and housing censuses as part of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme and the activities of the United Nations and other agencies in support of national efforts in that regard,

Noting efforts made by countries in the 2010 census round to reduce costs and improve the quality and timeliness of census operations and the wide dissemination of their census results through the use of new methodologies and contemporary technologies in the different phases of the census operation,

Recognizing the increasing importance of integrating the population and housing censuses with other types of censuses, civil registration and vital statistics and other statistical activities, such as the census of agriculture, census of establishments and administrative data sets,

Recognizing also the increasing importance of the 2020 round of population and housing censuses for meeting the data needs of the follow-up activities to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, the Millennium Summit, held in New York from 6 to 8 September 2000, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 14 June 1996, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995, the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995, and the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994, and to other regional and national meetings,

Stressing that population and housing censuses for a country as a whole and for each administrative area therein are one of the primary sources of data needed for formulating, implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of policies and programmes aimed at inclusive socioeconomic development and environmental sustainability,

Stressing also that population and housing censuses are designed to generate valuable statistics and indicators for assessing the situation of various special population groups, such as women, children, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees and stateless persons, and changes therein,

1. *Endorses* the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme, which comprises a number of activities aimed at ensuring that Member States conduct a population and housing census during the period from 2015 to 2024;
2. *Urges* Member States to conduct at least one population and housing census under the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme,

taking into account international and regional recommendations relating to population and housing censuses and giving particular attention to advance planning, cost efficiency, coverage and the timely dissemination of, and easy access to, census results for national stakeholders, the United Nations and other appropriate intergovernmental organizations in order to inform decisions and facilitate the effective implementation of development plans and programmes;

3. *Underscores* the need for countries to set quality standards for the conduct and evaluation of population and housing censuses in order to uphold the integrity, reliability, accuracy and value of the population and housing census results, taking into full account the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;¹

4. *Emphasizes* the importance of the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme for sustainable development planning, especially in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, and calls for full-fledged support for the Programme;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to prepare international statistical standards, methods and guidelines to facilitate activities for the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme, to ensure coordination of activities among stakeholders in assisting Member States in the implementation of the Programme, and to monitor and regularly report to the Statistical Commission on the implementation of the Programme.

*35th plenary meeting
10 June 2015*

¹ General Assembly resolution 68/261.