Economic and Social Council

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses

Twenty-first Meeting
Geneva, 18–20 September 2019
Item 1 of the provisional agenda
Adoption of the agenda and election of officers

Annotated provisional agenda

To be held in room XI at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, starting at 9:30 am on Wednesday 18 September 2019.

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda and election of officers.

2. Results of tests with regard to methodology, technology, participation and other aspects.

3. Measurement of the quality of administrative sources for use in censuses.

4. Research on the use of administrative data for censuses.

5. Future censuses beyond 2020.

6. Dissemination.

7. Geospatial information and censuses.

8. Leaving no-one behind – dealing with hard-to-count and vulnerable population groups in the census.

9. Future work.

10. Other business.

II. Annotations

The meeting is organized jointly with Eurostat following the provisions of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Statistical Programme for 2019,[1] adopted by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) and approved by the UNECE Executive Committee.

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[1] ECE/CES/2019/13, available from:
http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2019/ECE_CES_2019_13-1905935E.pdf

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1. Adoption of the agenda and election of officers

UNECE, in cooperation with Eurostat, regularly organizes meetings of the Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses. The aims of these meetings are: to facilitate the exchange of experience among countries; to increase knowledge of various issues related to the planning and conduction of population and housing censuses; and to promote the development and implementation of the CES Recommendations for the Censuses of Population and Housing. This results in increased capacity by countries to plan and conduct their national population and housing censuses and to produce internationally-comparable data.

This provisional agenda will be presented for the approval by the participants of the meeting.

2. Results of tests with regard to methodology, technology, participation and other aspects

In this session, countries will present test results on innovative methodology, technology, new data sources, and other aspects of the census. The issues to be discussed in relation to traditional censuses include factors that might influence participation, and what countries are doing to mitigate this risk. Countries that have already carried out a census in the 2020 round will share their experience.

In the 2020 census round, a significant number of UNECE countries are planning or considering the adoption of innovative census technologies, particularly for data collection. They include the Internet response option, which in some countries will be the main enumeration method, and the use of tablets or other handheld devices for field data collection.

3. Measurement of the quality of administrative sources for use in censuses

In February 2018, the CES Bureau established the Task Force on Measuring the Quality of Administrative Sources for Use in Censuses. The Task Force will present the progress of its work and seek feedback. Countries will also have the opportunity to share their experiences in measuring the quality of administrative sources for censuses with reference to past censuses or to their preparations for the 2020 round.

4. Research on the use of administrative data for censuses

Available information on plans for the 2020 census round show that a considerable number of UNECE countries, particularly in Western Europe, will adopt alternative census methodologies, often making use of data from administrative and multiple sources. In this session, countries will present the results of research on the use of administrative data for censuses, in the framework of register-based or combined censuses.

5. Future censuses beyond 2020

The future of censuses beyond 2020 was discussed at the UNECE-Eurostat expert meetings in 2017 and 2018. Consensus emerged that providing data on a decennial basis will no longer be acceptable, and that more frequent updates will be necessary. In February 2018, the CES Bureau requested the UNECE Steering Group on Censuses to prepare an in-depth analysis on the future of population and housing censuses after the 2020 round. The Steering Group will present the progress of its work and seek feedback.

6. Dissemination

Dissemination and communication of census results should be given prominence in all countries, regardless of their census methodology, because only when statistics are used can they be deemed useful. Considering the huge amount of resources normally spent on conducting the census and on ensuring production of the most relevant and accurate results, it is fundamental that adequate resources are invested and that appropriate means are identified to disseminate the census results and to communicate with data users.

Countries will have the opportunity to share information on their plans for census dissemination, including different media to be used and products to be developed to satisfy the needs of different categories of users.

7. Geospatial information and censuses

Over recent years, in most countries, the demand for geo-referenced census data has increased significantly. At the same time, the technology available to produce and disseminate geo-referenced statistical data has improved rapidly, and the costs have often decreased, making this technology relatively affordable for an increasing number of countries.

Some countries have already accumulated experience in producing and disseminating grid- or other geo-referenced statistics as outputs of their censuses, while others still have limited experience. The session will provide an opportunity to exchange experiences, present results, and discuss opportunities and challenges. An invited keynote speaker will share research findings on the potential value of geospatial information for censuses in the UNECE region.

8. Leaving no-one behind – dealing with hard-to-count and vulnerable population groups in the census

The pledge of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to leave no one behind and to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first. Censuses are a fundamental tool for achieving this, since they permit disaggregation by sex, age, ethnicity, migratory status, disability or geographic location, at a level of granularity not permitted by other sources. Such information is essential for producing meaningful Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators to monitor commitments and design policies. Some vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, however, are particularly hard to count in the census –either because they are hard to reach, such as the homeless, undocumented immigrants or older people living in institutions, or because they are hard to identify, such as gender minorities who are not identifiable in most current census questionnaires. Countries using registers face additional challenges in dealing with hard-to-reach and hard-to-count groups. This session will look at how censuses need to adapt to fulfil the "no-one left behind" commitment and the role of censuses in SDG monitoring and evaluation.

9. Future work

In this session, the plans for future work in the UNECE region to support countries in the implementation of the CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round will be presented and discussed.

10. Other business

In this session, the experts may discuss additional census-related items proposed by the Secretariat or the participants.