



STATISTICAL COMMISSION  
Eleventh session  
Item 11 of the provisional agenda

PROGRESS REPORT ON HOUSING CENSUS ACTIVITIES AND PLANS

(Report by the Secretary-General)

General Principles for a Housing Census

1. The Statistical Commission at its tenth session considered a set of draft principles for national housing censuses dealing with the substantive concepts and essential procedures applicable to housing censuses.<sup>1/</sup> The Commission requested that the Secretary-General prepare a revised version of the draft principles, taking into account the comments made by the Commission.<sup>2/</sup> The revised principles were issued as General Principles for a Housing Census (Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 28) in August 1958 and, in accordance with the Commission's wishes, were distributed to Member States and international agencies concerned with housing statistics in order that they might be used in planning and developing national housing censuses. The Governments were at the time requested by the Secretary-General to transmit to the Statistical Office their experience in applying the recommendations contained in the General Principles, with a view to the possible further revision and improvement of them at a later stage.

2. Field tests of the General Principles, as recommended by the Commission, were carried out in 1958 in connexion with the UN/FAO/IASI Census Training Centre for Latin America held in Lima, Peru, and the UN/FAO Census Training Centre for Asia and the Far East held in Tokyo, Japan. The General Principles were used as

<sup>1/</sup> E/CN.3/240/Add.1 - ST/STAT/P/L.22/Rev.1.

<sup>2/</sup> E/3126, para. 130, Resolution 12 (X).

basic training material at both training centres and were in effect tested at the experimental censuses of population, housing, and agriculture, which permitted a limited evaluation under field conditions.

3. The Report on the experimental census held at the Census Training Centre for Asia and the Far East contains a detailed description of the procedures followed and the experience gained in applying the General Principles.<sup>3/</sup> The questionnaire used in this experimental census, which was conducted in the suburban community of Adachi Machi in the Prefecture of Saitama near Tokyo, where both urban and rural features were present, contained all the basic questions specified in the General Principles, modified to suit local conditions. The Report discusses some of the problems reported by the participants in applying the recommendations. For example, the relationship between the concepts of housing unit and of household offered difficulties of application under local conditions. At Adachi Machi, nearly all housing units are dwellings built specially for habitation by one household, but in cases where two or more households lived in one such housing unit or where one household used several structures possibly situated within one compound, problems arose.

4. No detailed information permitting an evaluation of the applicability of the General Principles is available as yet for the experimental census conducted in connexion with the regional Census Training Centre for Latin America. It is, however, reported that no major problems were encountered.

5. Many countries have undertaken or are planning experimental censuses and it is hoped, in accordance with the wishes of the Commission that further field tests will be undertaken by the countries in connexion with their current housing census plans and that the Governments will inform the Secretary-General of their experience in applying the recommendations contained in the General Principles.

#### Regional and national housing census activities and plans

6. Progress in the field of housing censuses has been made both at the regional and the national level within the last decade. This progress is reflected by the adoption of regional housing census programmes and by an increase in national

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<sup>3/</sup> ST/STAT/5 (In preparation).

census activity. Many countries have taken censuses of housing in recent years, and as a result the 1959 Statistical Yearbook now provides housing census information for eighty-three countries and territories.<sup>4/</sup> Furthermore, according to preliminary data collected by the Statistical Office, it appears likely that perhaps eighty-nine countries will have taken a census of housing, either separately or in connexion with a population census, during the period 1955-1964. Some of these inquiries will be complete, others will be on a sample basis. Still others may cover only a limited area within the country.

#### Regional housing census activities

7. The General Principles were used in the formulation of regional housing census programmes for Europe and the Americas. While no separate programmes were prepared for the regions of Africa, and Asia and the Far East (ECAFE), it may be noted, however, that the Statistical Survey for Africa will include an item on housing.<sup>5/</sup> Also, it is noteworthy that a recent progress report on plans and preparations for the 1960 World Programme of Censuses of Population in ECAFE countries shows that thirteen of the nineteen countries participating in that programme propose to investigate housing either separately or in connexion with a census of population or agriculture.<sup>6/</sup>

8. Europe. The Working Group on Censuses of Population and Housing of the Conference of European Statisticians reached agreement on the final text for a programme for national housing censuses in Europe at its fourth session, in November 1958.<sup>7/</sup> The Conference of European Statisticians subsequently recommended "that the statistical offices put this programme into effect in their next censuses of housing".<sup>8/</sup>

9. The European programme differs from the General Principles since the latter gives only general indications on many points where the European programme gives specific recommendations. A more specific housing census programme may be

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<sup>4/</sup> UN Statistical Yearbook 1959, Table 179.

<sup>5/</sup> E/CN.14/25.

<sup>6/</sup> E/CN.11/ASTAT/Conf.3/L.3.

<sup>7/</sup> Conf. Eur. Stats/WG.6/76.

<sup>8/</sup> Conf. Eur. Stats/WG.6/82, para. 1.

warranted for Europe as there is considerable similarity between the European countries, both as regards basic requirements and statistical organization. Further, the European version of the General Principles includes other adaptations such as: "(a) the inclusion of additional (or more detailed) items on data, classifications and tabulations; (b) the inclusion of additional optional topics for the guidance of countries which wish to develop their censuses beyond the scope of the international recommendations; and (c) the exclusion of parts of definitions which are not relevant under circumstances prevailing in Europe".<sup>9/</sup>

10. The Working Group of the Conference of European Statisticians further stated that the European programme for national housing censuses was affected by two general considerations, namely, first "that the housing census and the population census are taken as one statistical operation, or at least as two well co-ordinated operations, and that the data recommended for the population censuses are available and can be related to the data on housing units". The second consideration is "that the housing census is envisaged as a universal enumeration of housing units and their essential characteristics, one of the main purposes of which is to provide benchmark information which can be supplemented by more restricted housing surveys, by sampling inquiries and by current housing statistics".<sup>10/</sup>

11. The Americas. The Committee on Improvement of National Statistics (COINS) of the Inter American Statistical Institute at its sixth session, (November 1958) considered and recommended to the countries of the region a "Minimum" and an "Expanded" programme for national housing censuses in connexion with the Program of the 1960 Census of America.<sup>11/</sup> The Census Subcommittee of COINS took into account the recommendations and principles contained in the General Principles in formulating the housing census programme for the region. The Census Subcommittee decided in its recommendations not to make a distinction in emphasis between the housing census programme and the programmes for the other censuses but

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<sup>9/</sup> Ibid., para. 3.

<sup>10/</sup> Ibid., paras. 4-5.

<sup>11/</sup> IASI, Program of the 1960 Census of America. (COTA 1960). Report of the VI Session of COINS, Buenos Aires, November 17-28, 1958. Washington, D.C., April 1959.

considered it desirable to propose that COINS adopt recommendations of equal force for the censuses of population, housing and agriculture, although the Subcommittee noted that the General Principles were simply for the guidance of census offices in planning housing inquiries.

12. The "Minimum" housing census programme recommended by COINS included the following topics: housing unit, room, water supply, toilet, occupant and tenure. The "Expanded" programme included in addition to the topics listed above more detailed questions in respect of water supply and toilet facilities and also included five additional topics, namely: type of housing unit, material of construction, lighting, rent, and home appliances.

13. Both the European and the COINS programmes depart in some respects from the list of basic topics given in paragraph 401 and described in paragraphs 402-410 of the General Principles. The European programme goes considerably further by being more specific and including several additional items. The "Minimum" programme recommended for use in connexion with the 1960 Census of America is somewhat less detailed than the list of basic topics contained in the General Principles.

14. The regional housing census programmes are very valuable as they help to achieve an increase in national census activity and bring about a greater degree of comparability within the regions than would be possible with a world programme alone. It is important, however, that, if possible, regional programmes be formulated in such a way as not to lose inter-regional comparability.

15. Summary Table 1 gives a preliminary comparison between the recommended coverage in respect of each topic included in the lists of basic and additional items included in the housing census programmes of Europe and the Americas and those contained in the General Principles. The table is limited in that it is in the nature of a summary and does not provide the detail of clarification in respect of recommended general limitations, definitions and classifications available in the texts of the respective programmes.

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Summary Table 1. Topics and Coverage included in the European and the Western Hemisphere Housing Census Programmes and in the General Principles for a Housing Census. 1/

("-" indicates that the topic was not included)

Topics and coverage recommended in:

<u>UN General Principles</u>	<u>COINS "Minimum" and "Expanded Programme" 2/</u>	<u>European Programme</u>
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A. BASIC TOPICS AND COVERAGE

1. Location (a)	Location (d)	Location (a)
2. Class or type of housing unit (a)	Housing unit (d) <u>See B 14 below</u>	Type of housing unit (a)
3. No. of occupants (a)	No. of occupants (d)	No. of occupants (e)
4. Selected demographic and economic characteristics of occupants and household and family relationships (a)	-	No. and type of households (e)
	-	Socio-economic category of the main supporter (or head of household) (d)
5. Water supply system (a)	Water supply system (d)	Water supply system (a)
6. Type of dwelling or rustic housing unit (b)	-	-
7. No. of rooms (b)	No. of rooms (d)	No. of rooms (b)
8. Toilet installations (b)	Toilet installations (d)	Toilet installations (a)
9. Occupied or vacant (b)	- 2/	Occupied or vacant (b)
10. Tenure (c)	Tenure (d)	Tenure (e)
11. <u>See B 15 below</u>	-	Type of building in which the dwelling is located (b)
12. <u>See B 2 below</u>	-	Bathing facilities (b)
13. <u>See B 3 below</u>	<u>See B 3 below</u>	Electricity (b)

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Summary Table 1 (continued)

("-" indicates that the topic was not included)

Topics and coverage recommended in:

<u>UN General Principles</u>	COINS "Minimum" and "Expanded Programme" 2/	European Programme
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B. ADDITIONAL TOPICS AND COVERAGE

Installations (d)

1. Cooking facilities	-	Cooking facilities
2. Bathing facilities	-	<u>See A 12 above</u>
3. Electricity	Lighting	<u>See A 13 above</u>
4. Gas	-	Gas
5. Heating by type and source of energy	-	Heating by type and source of energy
6. Installations for cottage industries	-	Installations for cottage industries
7. -	-	Lift for use by persons

Household conveniences (d)

8. Refrigeration	Such elements as	Refrigerator
9. Telephone	contribute to the	Telephone
10. Radio receiver	comfort of the home:	Radio receiver
11. Television receiver	Refrigerator, etc.	Television receiver
12. Washing machine		Washing machine
13. Vacuum cleaner		Vacuum cleaner

Characteristics of the housing unit or the building (d)

14. <u>See A 2 and 6 above</u>	Type of housing unit (e)	<u>See A 2 above</u>
15. Type of building in which the dwelling is located	-	<u>See A 11 above</u>
16. Year of construction	-	Year of construction
17. Materials of the	Materials of the	Materials of the
(a) walls	(a) outside walls	(a) external walls
(b) roof	(b) roof	(b) roofing
(c) floors	(c) floor	(c) floor structure
18. State of repair or dilapidation	-	-
19. Floor space of the dwelling	-	Floor space of the dwelling

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Summary Table 1 (continued)

("-" indicates that the topic was not included)

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Topics and coverage recommended in:

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<u>UN General Principles</u>	COINS "Minimum" and "Expanded Programme" <u>2/</u>	European Programme
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B. ADDITIONAL TOPICS AND COVERAGE (cont.)

Characteristics of the housing unit or the building (d) (cont.)

20.	Outdoor spaces	-	
	(a) courtyards	-	
	(b) platforms	-	
	(c) terraces	-	
	(d) gardens, etc.	-	
21.	-	-	Story on which dwelling is located
22.	-	-	Availability of garage belonging to the housing unit

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Coverage. Data are to be collected for:

- (a) all housing units
  - (b) conventional dwellings only /General Principles: Conventional dwellings and rustic housing units. Data may be obtained from sample of housing units<sup>7</sup>
  - (c) occupied conventional dwellings and rustic housing units
  - (d) all housing units occupied by private households
  - (e) all occupied housing units
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1/ For details in respect of general recommendations, definitions and classifications see the respective texts of the regional programmes.

2/ The general recommendations for the COINS housing census programme were as follows: "(1) Investigate at least the characteristics of occupied dwelling units located in urban areas if available resources or other reasons of national interest preclude country-wide coverage. (2) If resources permit, extend the investigation to unoccupied housing units, at least in urban areas".



National housing census activity in the decade 1955 - 1964

16. Information collected by the Statistical Office shows that eighty-nine countries, both independent and non-self-governing, either have taken or have declared their intention to take a census of housing or to collect housing census data in connexion with their population censuses within the period 1955 - 1964. According to information available to the Statistical Office as of 31 December 1959 housing data were collected for twenty-seven areas during the five year period 1955 - 1959 and it appears likely that housing investigations, either complete or partial, will be undertaken in sixty-two areas during the period 1960 - 1964.

17. Summary table 2 below shows for each major region the number of areas for which housing data have been collected during the period 1955 - 1959 and the number of areas for which investigations of housing are planned or likely to be taken during the period 1960 - 1964. A detailed listing by region and area of past and planned housing census activity is available in Annex I of Statistical Indicators for Housing Levels of Living presented to the Commission as document E/CN.3/R.2 (distribution restricted).

Summary Table 2. Number of areas for which housing data have been or are likely to be collected during the period 1955 - 1964, by region

Period	Africa		Americas		Asia		Europe		Oceania	
	Cen- suses	Partial inquir- ies	Cen- suses	Partial inquir- ies	Cen- suses	Partial inquir- ies	Cen- suses	Partial inquir- ies	Cen- suses	Partial inquir- ies
1955- 1959	2	10	2	1	3	2	4	1	2	0
1960- 1964	3		20		15		24		1	

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Future work in the field of housing censuses

18. In accordance with Resolution 12, taken at the Commission's last session, it is planned to undertake, after the 1960 series of censuses, a systematic analysis and evaluation of international and national experience regarding the adaptation of the General Principles for regional programmes and their application in national censuses.

19. It is hoped that a manual of housing census methods may be prepared on the basis of the analysis and evaluation referred to above and of any other materials available to the Statistical Office. Further field tests of the recommendations contained in the General Principles may be arranged, either on a regional or a national basis, possibly in connexion with regional or national experimental censuses, if the countries express interest.

20. The views of the Commission regarding the future work to be undertaken by the Statistical Office in the field of housing censuses are invited.

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