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Items for discussion and decision: population and housing censuses

2010 and 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programmes

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2014/219. The report provides a brief overview of the implementation of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme, including information on national participation in the 2010 census round, successes and challenges and a summary of activities carried out by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in support of the 2010 World Programme. The report also describes the preparatory activities for the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme. The Statistical Commission is invited to express its views regarding the information provided in the report. In particular, the Commission is invited to approve the draft resolution on the 2020 World Programme, review and endorse the draft *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses: the 2020 Round, Revision 3*, and provide guidance on the proposed activities of the Division for the 2020 World Programme.

Points for discussion by the Commission are set out in paragraph 31 of the present report.

* E/CN.3/2015/1.



I. Introduction

1. At its forty-third session, held from 28 February to 2 March 2012, the Statistical Commission requested, in its decision 43/101 (E/2012/24, chap. I, sect. B), that the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs: (a) prepare a comprehensive report by the end of the 2010 census round on the implementation of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme and a timetable for the development of the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme, including the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses: the 2020 Round, Revision 3*; 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. Pursuant to that request, the present report provides a brief overview of implementation of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme by national census authorities, including on the achievements and challenges they faced, and of the activities carried out by the Division during the census round. The report also provides information on the preparations for the launch of the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme, covering the period from 2015 to 2024. Information on country implementation of the 2010 census round and related activities of the Statistics Division is presented in greater detail in the reports of the Statistical Commission at its forty-second (E/2011/24) and forty-third (E/2012/24) sessions, held in 2011 and 2013.

II. Overview of the implementation of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme

2. At its thirty-sixth session, held in March 2005 (E/2005/24), the Statistical Commission launched the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme, whose implementation the Economic and Social Council had approved in its resolution 2005/13.

A. National implementation of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme

3. The 2010 World Programme recognizes population and housing censuses as one of the main sources of data for effective development planning and objective decision-making. In resolution 2005/13, the Council urged Member States to conduct a population and housing census at least once during the period from 2005 to 2014 and to disseminate the results as an essential source of information for planning.

4. At the end of the 2010 census round, 214 countries or areas had conducted a population and housing census for the round, comprising about 93 per cent of the world population. Twenty-one countries and areas, mainly in Africa and Asia, did not participate in the round, which resulted in an estimated 7 per cent of the world population not being enumerated during the current round. By comparison, 26 countries and areas did not conduct a census for the 2000 round, which spanned the period from 1995 to 2004. Table 1 below sets out information on the implementation of the 2010 census round by region. Detailed and country-specific

information on 2010 round census dates is available from the website of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/censusdates.htm>).

Table 1
Number of counties/areas that conducted a census during the 2010 census round (2005-2014), by geographic region

<i>Census year</i>	<i>Africa</i>	<i>North America</i>	<i>South America</i>	<i>Asia</i>	<i>Europe</i>	<i>Oceania</i>	<i>Total</i>
2005	1	–	1	6	1	3	14
2006	6	4	2	4	3	8	27
2007	5	1	1	2	–	2	11
2008	7	–	–	3	1	1	12
2009	5	–	–	4	3	3	15
2010	5	14	3	12	5	4	43
2011	4	12	2	6	33	3	60
2012	5	2	5	2	1	1	16
2013	5	1	–	–	1	–	7
2014	6	–	–	2	1	–	9
Total	49	36	14	41	49	25	214

Note: Only the first census is counted for each of the 22 countries or areas that conducted more than one census during the round. Twenty-one countries/areas did not conduct a census during the 2010 census round (2005-2014).

5. The peak year in the 2010 round of censuses was 2011, when 60 countries/areas conducted a population and housing census were conducted worldwide.¹ According to the initial scheduling by countries and areas, the peak year was expected to be 2010. However, owing to various factors, such as financial constraints, technical difficulties encountered in the preparations, and political and social insecurity, 17 countries/areas had their censuses rescheduled from 2010 to 2011. The postponements, coupled with the fact that a number of countries/areas were not able to conduct a population and housing census in the 2010 round, indicate that implementation of the 2010 World Programme faced considerable challenges and that those challenges will most likely need to be addressed in the next round as well.

B. Achievements and challenges in the implementation of censuses for the 2010 round

Achievements

6. Reviews of national experiences show that, as a result of efforts by countries to reduce costs and improve the quality and the timeliness of the dissemination of their census results, major innovations were made to the conduct of population and

¹ It should be noted that the European Union urged many of its member States and candidate countries to conduct their respective censuses in 2011.

housing censuses for the 2010 round, mainly through the use of new methodologies and advanced technologies.² The reviews also showed that a significant number of countries adopted new methodologies in terms of sources of data based on the use of administrative registers, rolling surveys and combinations of sources to produce data that had been previously obtained through full enumeration in the field (traditional census). There continues to be a trend towards countries using a variety of methods to generate their population counts rather than a single method of data collection. National practices in the use of alternatives to full enumeration in the field vary and call for more careful documentation and study.

7. Another practice that a sizeable number of countries³ adopted in the context of the 2010 census round was to use a multi-mode or mixture of data collection methods, including telephone interviews, electronic questionnaires and paper questionnaires. Some were conducted through self-enumeration, for example, on the Internet and through return questionnaires, whereas others were through face-to-face interviews.

8. There was significant use of contemporary technologies in all phases of the 2010 round of the census as countries aspired to increase overall response, quality and timeliness of census data. Technologies included the use of the Internet and hand-held devices (personal digital assistants (PDAs) and tablet computers) for data collection; integrated systems for field management; geospatial technologies for mapping; scanning technology; and mobile telephones. There was an increase in the web-based data dissemination of census results in order to maximize utilization of the data by using the Internet in conjunction with geographic information systems for displaying and visualizing the data and for housing interactive databases. Countries reported⁴ that the implementation of new technologies was the most successful aspect of the census-taking conducted for the 2010 round, with 56 per cent of the countries responding.⁵

9. The review of country experiences shows strong collaboration among countries on different aspects of census-taking, including on data dissemination, questionnaire design and alternative census methodologies. That collaboration, mainly through South-South cooperation, has enabled countries to draw on each other's strengths and achievements. It has allowed countries to learn from other countries' experiences and to acquire knowledge and examples of good practices in census-taking.

² See report of the United States of America on the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme (E/CN.3/2012/2); and report on the results of the survey on census methods used by countries in the 2010 census round, available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010_PHC/docs/ReportOnSurveyFor2010Census.pdf.

³ For example, as presented in the report on the results of a survey on census methods used by countries in the 2010 census round (see footnote 2 above), of the 117 countries using face-to-face interviews, 44 combined that method with another one for data collection; of the 39 countries using paper-based self-enumeration, 34 combined that method with another one.

⁴ In 2009 and early 2010, the Statistics Division conducted a survey to collect information on methods used by countries or areas in the planning and implementation of their 2010 round of population and housing censuses. The survey questionnaire was sent to 233 countries and areas and replies were received from 138 countries or areas (a response rate of approximately 60 per cent). The results are presented in the two reports identified in footnote 2 above.

⁵ See "Overview of national experiences for population and housing censuses of the 2010 round" (June 2013), prepared by the Statistics Division, available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010_PHC/UNSD/overview.pdf.

10. It should be noted that according to the results of the programme review, over 80 per cent of the responding countries use United Nations census guidelines, most notably the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2*, for the preparation of their censuses (E/CN.3/2012/2, para. 66).

Challenges

11. While the 2010 census round is generally regarded as a success in terms of the number of countries that conducted their national censuses and in introducing innovations, there were reported, observed and documented challenges. As part of the Programme review, many countries — around 67 per cent (E/CN.3/2012/2, para. 21) — identified census cost as a major challenge in the planning and conduct of their censuses for the 2010 round. Census cost was the number one challenge in all regions of the world among respondents. Owing to the fact that countries have become more innovative in respect of census-taking, in particular with their use of advanced technologies, and the demand for data that is more accurate, of higher quality and more rapidly produced, the cost of conducting censuses has concomitantly gone up.

12. Other challenges that countries faced included timeliness in the release of census results, public perception, low response rates, managing the outsourcing of census operations and insufficient dissemination and exploitation of the results. In some countries, there were quality concerns owing to problems with coverage. Assessing the quality of census operations and of overall coverage, however, has remained a challenge for many countries. Although the use of contemporary technologies is considered to be the most successful aspect of the 2010 census round, there were still challenges for a number of reasons, including lack of in-house technical skills and insufficient planning.

13. Twenty-one countries did not conduct a census for the 2010 round owing to a variety of challenges, the most prominent of which were political instability, which may have hindered them from the planning and carrying out of census activities; and lack of funding and inadequate planning and management of the census operations.

C. Activities of the Statistics Division in support of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme

14. At the launch of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme in 2005, the Statistical Commission requested that the Statistics Division, in its role as the secretariat of the Programme, act as the umbrella organization for setting standards, providing technical expertise and training and setting priorities as needed. In response to that mandate, the Division has played a vital role in the implementation of the 2010 World Programme and has undertaken a variety of activities to support it.

15. The Division developed and issued international census guidelines, including the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2*; the *Handbook on Geospatial Infrastructure in Support of Census Activities*;⁶ the *Handbook on Population and Housing Census Editing, Revision 1*;⁷

⁶ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.09.XVIII.8.

⁷ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.09.XVII.11.

Measuring the Economically Active in Population Censuses: A Handbook;⁸ the technical report entitled “Census data capture methodology”; and the technical report entitled “Post enumeration surveys: operational guidelines”. In addition, the Division, in partnership with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), developed a software package, CensusInfo, to help countries to disseminate census data and conducted training workshops on the use of the software.

16. The Division implemented a programme of yearly regional and national training workshops on technical issues related to different steps of the census process in order to help countries to prepare for and carry out their censuses, and to analyse and disseminate the results. The Division has conducted 59 regional, subregional and national workshops, providing training to over 1,420 participants from around 140 countries in the period 2006-2014. Table 2 below presents a summary of those activities.⁹

17. Throughout the 2010 census round, the Division provided technical assistance to national statistical authorities on various country-specific aspects of the census process in order to strengthen their capacity to plan for and carry out population and housing censuses according to international standards and guidelines. In addition, the Division engaged an interregional adviser on population and housing censuses to provide technical assistance to countries on different aspects of their censuses. The Division served as a member of an international technical advisory board for a number of countries in difficult or post-conflict situations and facilitated South-South exchanges of experience through study visits wherein officials from less statistically developed countries were able to learn from countries having more experience and acquire knowledge and examples of good practices in census-taking.

18. Through the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme website (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/census2010.htm>), the Division continuously monitored national activities related to the planning and taking of censuses and made the information available on the website. The Division also used the information to identify countries in need of technical and other assistance. The resource centre includes a census knowledge base that serves as a comprehensive facility for providing technical documentation for census takers.

Table 2
Census training workshops conducted by the Statistics Division, 2006-2014

<i>Workshop topic</i>	<i>Number of workshops</i>	<i>Number of participants</i>	<i>Number of participating countries</i>	<i>Participating regions/regional groups</i>
Principles and recommendations, Revision 2	2	97	44	Africa ^a
Census cartography and census management	7	224	104	Africa, ^a Asia, Caribbean, Pacific, Latin America, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)
Census data capture	6	181	89	Africa, ^a Asia, CIS, Pacific, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

⁸ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.09.XVII.7.

⁹ Detailed information on each workshop is available from the website of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/cwp2010/docs.htm>).

<i>Workshop topic</i>	<i>Number of workshops</i>	<i>Number of participants</i>	<i>Number of participating countries</i>	<i>Participating regions/regional groups</i>
Census evaluation using post-enumeration surveys	5	114	78	Africa, ^a Asia, Arabic-speaking countries, Latin America
Census evaluation using demographic methods	3	72	32	Asia, ^b Arabic-speaking countries, Myanmar ^c
CensusInfo				
Regional	7	172	122	Africa, ^a Asia, Caribbean, Arabic-speaking countries, CIS
National	13	176	11	Cambodia, Tajikistan, Uganda, Cameroon, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Mexico, Indonesia, Malawi, Egypt, ^d Mozambique
Census data dissemination and spatial analysis	4	126	81	Africa, Asia, Latin America, Arabic-speaking countries
Census data archiving	1	21	18	Africa
In-depth census data analysis	7	176	6	Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, ^e Kenya, Liberia, Malawi
Population projections	3	67	46	Africa, ^a Asia
Collection and dissemination of socioeconomic data from population and housing censuses	1	25	8	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
Total	59	1 429		

^a Two workshops held in Africa, conducted for English-speaking and French-speaking countries.

^b Two workshops held in Asia.

^c One national workshop conducted for Myanmar.

^d Three national workshops conducted for Egypt.

^e Two national workshops conducted for Ethiopia.

19. The Statistics Division carried out two surveys on national practices for censuses of the 2010 round. The first survey was carried out in 2009/2010¹⁰ to better understand how countries were planning and conducting or otherwise compiling data for the 2010 round of censuses and the challenges they faced. On the basis of the survey, the Division issued a working paper entitled the “Report on the results of a survey on census methods used by countries in the 2010 census round” and used the information to assess the assistance needed by countries in implementing the round. The second survey was undertaken in collaboration with the United States Census Bureau in 2011 and in response to a request by the Statistical Commission at its forty-second session as part of the programme review of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme. The objective was to collect information on the lessons learned from the 2010 round of population and housing censuses from which recommendations for the 2020 census round were made to the Statistical Commission at its forty-third session. The Division further analysed the information and prepared a report entitled “Overview of national experiences for population and housing censuses of the 2010 round” as input into

¹⁰ For the European region, the survey was carried out in collaboration with the Statistics Division of the Economic Commission for Europe.

the review and revision of the United Nations *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2*.

20. The work of the Division to prepare for the 2010 census round was supported by a grant from the World Bank for the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme (2006-2012) for the implementation of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme (2006-2012) in developing countries. The grant was used for a number of critical activities, mainly to conduct training workshops throughout the round and in all regions of the world and to prepare some of the international guidelines. UNSD also received a grant from the Italian Government for a project for the African region on *Strengthening national capacity to analyze, present and disseminate data for evidence-based policy making*. The objective of the three-year project (2010-2012), was to enhance the capacity of countries to analyze, present and disseminate data derived from the 2010 round of population and housing censuses in ways suitable to all their target groups, to better inform policy making and monitoring.

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

21. In its decision 43/101, the Statistical Commission requested the Statistics Division to prepare 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*. In addition, the Statistical Commission requested that the Division 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. The section describes the ongoing work in support of the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme and proposals for activities to be undertaken during the round.

A. International methodological census guidelines

22. Pursuant to decision 43/101, the Statistics Division established an expert group, comprising census experts from countries in both developed and developing regions, regional commissions and relevant international and regional organizations, to review the text of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2* and propose changes and updates. In addition to electronic communications exchanged among members of the different working groups of the expert group, the Division organized two meetings of experts to revise the census recommendations, taking into account contemporary practices in census-taking. Reports of the meetings are available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/census2010.htm>.

23. Through the international expert group, the Statistics Division has prepared a draft version of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses: the 2020 Round, Revision 3*, which will be submitted as a background document to the Statistical Commission for consideration and approval. The salient features of the revised draft are the restructured guidelines, which have been made more intuitive and user friendly than those contained in the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2*, and which,

follow as closely as possible the Generic Statistical Business Process Model.¹¹ Consequently, the revised draft is divided into four parts: on essential features and census methodology; on planning, organization and management; on census operation activities; and on population and housing census topics. The revised census recommendations provide more elaboration on alternative methodologies to the traditional census for producing census statistics; new chapters on the use of technology in census operations; archiving of individual records; overall evaluation of the census; and major changes to concepts and terminology related to economic characteristics topics resulting from the “Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization”, adopted by the nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians in October 2013 as a new International Labour Organization (ILO) conceptual framework for work statistics.

24. As had been done for the previous census round, the Statistics Division intends to prepare international census guidelines for the 2020 round. In addition to the third revision of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*, the Division will update existing information, as necessary, or prepare new handbooks and technical reports. For example, the Division will update the *Handbook on Census Management for Population and Housing Censuses*¹² in order to align it with contemporary census practices, including to provide examples at the country level of good practices in the planning and management of censuses, based on recent experience. The update will also include guidance in areas that either were not adequately addressed or fully elaborated in the current version of the handbook: an area for enhancement refers to practical guidelines on quality assurance in terms of setting measurable goal/indicators for census activities; monitoring and evaluating performance vis-à-vis the overall goals; and risk assessment and mitigation. The revised handbook aims to present adequate guidelines on the contract management and monitoring of outsourced census activities; on the systematic recording and documentation of the census experience in order to preserve institutional memory; and on the development and implementation of a communication, publicity and advocacy strategy for census activities covering the entire process, including for enhanced dissemination and utilization of results.

25. The *Handbook on Population and Housing Census Editing, Revision 1* will also need to be updated, taking into account changes in population and housing census topics and their classifications as contained in the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses: the 2020 Round, Revision 3*. In addition, *Measuring the Economically Active in Population Censuses: A Handbook* may require major revision to reflect recent the decisions of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (new concepts, definitions, classifications). On the basis of information on national experiences collected by the workshops that the Division conducted on planning and implementing post-enumeration surveys and on census data evaluations based on demographic techniques, it is anticipated that the Division will develop a set of guidelines on census evaluation (that includes planning and implementing the post-enumeration surveys to evaluate census coverage, on the one hand, and the evaluation of census data, on the other). Three areas that would benefit from technical guidelines that are based on a review of national practices are census

¹¹ Available from <http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/GSBPM/GSBPM+v5.0> (accessed 7 October 2014).

¹² United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.XVII.15, Rev.1.

legislation the use of technology for census data collection; and methodology for estimating the cost of the census.

26. The development of census guidelines is normally carried out through the contributions of experts in the respective areas/topics. As with previous rounds of the World Population And Housing Census Programme, the Division will develop international census guidelines by engaging national and international census experts while paying due regard to regional representation.

B. Technical support and training

27. The Statistics Division, in collaboration with the regional commissions and other relevant regional and international organizations, plans to undertake a variety of activities aimed at strengthening national capacities to undertake census operations. Taking into account new developments in the census field, the activities, which will be based on the assessed needs of countries, will include:

(a) **Organizing regional technical training workshops.** Workshops will be organized to train participants on the implementation of census methodological guidelines and on different topics related to the census process, and to enhance sharing and exchange of national census experiences;

(b) **Providing direct technical assistance to countries.** At their request, the Division will provide technical assistance (including training) to countries targeting a specific area in which guidance is required;

(c) **Organizing study visits (South-South cooperation) for countries to learn from one another.** In its decision 43/101, the Statistical Commission noted the importance of country-to-country assistance, particularly South-South cooperation, in the conduct of censuses, and urged the Statistics Division and the regional commissions to continue to promote the exchange of country experience through regional and international workshops.

28. The Statistics Division plans to organize regional workshops that will cover such areas/topics as: census planning and management, including on managing outsourcing of census operation and setting and measuring quality targets; census cartography, using advanced technology; census data processing, using advanced technology (for example, scanning and automated coding); census evaluation (post-enumeration surveys and demographic analysis of data), in accordance with Statistical Commission decision 43/101; use of technology (the Internet, personal digital assistants, monitoring systems) for data collection; data dissemination and utilization (including advocacy, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund); census documentation and archiving; and the new ILO conceptual framework for work statistics. Additional areas/topics may be covered in response to regional interests and requests.

C. World Population and Housing Census Programme resource centre

29. As had been done for the 2010 census round, the Statistics Division will maintain the World Population and Housing Census Programme website as a resource for countries to exchange their experiences and share their knowledge and information on census-taking. It also serves to provide guidance to countries and

monitor progress on the implementation of the Programme. The website will be continually updated on census activities, census guidelines, national census materials and a census knowledge base, which is a comprehensive facility that provides technical documentation for census takers.

D. Review of national experience

30. Pursuant to decision 43/101, in which the Statistical Commission requested that the 2020 census round have three reviews, the Statistics Division will undertake such reviews in order to gather information on country practices for the round and identify challenges and countries in need of assistance. The collected information will be appropriately analysed and disseminated.

E. Microdata repository

31. At the second meeting of the expert group on the third revision of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*, experts pointed out the lack of an international organization with the responsibility of collecting and making accessible census microdata samples from countries. In that connection, it was suggested that the Statistics Division take on the role as part of its responsibilities for the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme.¹³

F. Resolution on the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme

32. At its forty-third session, the Statistical Commission requested that the Statistics Division 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. The draft resolution is submitted for consideration by the Commission (see annex).

IV. Points for discussion

33. The Commission might wish to take note of and comment on the implementation of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme.

34. The Commission is invited to:

(a) Consider and approve the draft resolution on the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme;

(b) Review and endorse the draft *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 3*;

(c) Comment and provide guidance on the proposed activities of the Statistics Division for the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme.

¹³ See <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/egm/NewYork/2014/report.pdf>.

Annex

Draft resolution for consideration by the Commission

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 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, 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 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 2012,¹ the Millennium Summit, held in New York from 6 to 8 September 2000,² the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in Istanbul from 3 to 14 June 1996,³ the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995,⁴ the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995,⁵ and the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994,⁶ 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,

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20-22 June 2012 (A/CONF.216/16 and Corr.1).*

² General Assembly resolution 55/2.

³ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.IV.6).*

⁴ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13).*

⁵ *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8).*

⁶ *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18).*

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 and migrants, and changes therein,

1. *Endorses* the 2020 World Population and Housing Censuses 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, the timely dissemination of and easy access to census results for national stakeholders, the United Nations and other appropriate intergovernmental organizations in order to facilitate the effective utilization and promotion of development planning and programmes and studies on population and sustainable development;

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;

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 a 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 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme.
