

Statistical Commission
Thirty-sixth session
1-4 March 2005
Item 5(a) of the provisional agenda
Population and housing censuses

Background document
Available in English only

**Report of the November 2004
Joint ECE-EUROSTAT Work Session on Housing Censuses**

Prepared by ECE Secretariat



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

CES/2004/50
14 December 2004

Original: ENGLISH

**STATISTICAL COMMISSION and ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

Fifty-third plenary session
(Geneva, 13-16 June 2005)

**REPORT OF THE NOVEMBER 2004
JOINT ECE-EUROSTAT WORK SESSION ON HOUSING CENSUSES**

Introduction

1. The Joint ECE-EUROSTAT Work Session on Housing Censuses was held in Geneva on 26 November 2004. The work session was organized in cooperation with UNFPA which facilitated the participation of census experts in the meeting.
2. The meeting was attended by delegates of Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States and Uzbekistan.
3. The European Commission was represented by Eurostat. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the United Nations Statistics Division were also present.
4. Mr. Aidan Punch (Ireland) was elected as Chairperson of the meeting. Mr. Ian Máté (United Kingdom) chaired the afternoon proceedings.

Organisation of the meeting

5. The main substantive session of the meeting was dedicated to the discussion of the topics for the 2010 round of housing censuses, on the basis of 5 papers available on the UNECE website at the address: <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2004.11.census2.htm>

6. The main conclusions reached by the participants during the discussion of the substantive items of the agenda are presented in the annex to the report that was prepared after the meeting (see Annex I).

Recommendations for future work

Structure and content of the Recommendations

7. The meeting agreed that the essence of the structure used in the 2000 Recommendations for housing censuses in the ECE region should be retained for the 2010 Recommendations.

8. The meeting agreed that consideration should be given to classifying people in terms of how they are housed in the broadest sense (including for instance homeless people and those in temporary accommodation). In this respect, people can be divided into those living in conventional dwellings and those in other types of living arrangements.

9. The meeting also agreed that countries should collect, to the extent possible, data on all dwellings types making up the housing stock. However, to ensure international comparability, all countries should, at a minimum, report on occupied conventional dwellings.

10. The meeting agreed, that in the revision of the Recommendations, consideration should be given to the following issues:

- a. Reclassification of building type to better distinguish detached, semi-detached, row (terraced) houses, apartment buildings and others.
- b. The distinction between occupied and vacant dwellings to be explored further, bearing in mind main and secondary residences.
- c. Definition of room to be reviewed in the context of dimension, use and the presence or not of window(s).
- d. Should the kitchen be counted as a room?
- e. Access to dwellings: this is an emerging area in the context of an ageing population and persons with disabilities, and should be reviewed to see if it is relevant to include it in the new Recommendations (related topics “number of floors” and “presence of lift(s)”).
- f. The existing indicators of equipment and amenity standards to be reviewed. In particular, the methods of cooling to be added to the existing categories of heating.
- g. The issues of overcrowding and housing consumption should be considered. In this context, the existing topics “Number of rooms” and “Useful and/or living floor space” should be reviewed.

11. The meeting agreed that the material presented in the current version of the “Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 1” (United Nations Statistics Division, 1998) should be considered in the preparation of the new census recommendations for the ECE region, taking into account that this document is also currently under revision.

Process

12. The meeting proposed that the work on the new recommendations should be coordinated by a new Task Force on Housing Census Recommendations (Leading country: United Kingdom). The ECE Secretariat informed the meeting that member countries would be contacted by 15 December 2004 to verify their interest in joining the Task Force.

13. The meeting also proposed that the Task Force would require feedback on the outcome of its work from the ECE Steering Group on the Coordination of International Housing Statistics appointed by the Conference of European Statisticians, the United Nations Expert Group Meeting on Population and Housing Censuses (next meeting planned in September 2005) and, if possible, from the ECE Committee on Human Settlements.

14. The meeting recommended that the work on the new census recommendations for the ECE region should fit into the overall preparatory process for the 2010 round of population and housing censuses at the world level, which also includes the revision of the “Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses”. In this context, the meeting noted the proposal by UNSD to include a housing census questionnaire in the Demographic Yearbook data collection system.

15. The first draft of the Recommendations should be finalized by May 2005 at the latest and further work should be carried forward according to the time-table set by the Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses.

Adoption of the report

16. The participants adopted the report of the meeting at its closing session.

ANNEX I

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS REACHED BY THE PARTICIPANTS DURING THE DISCUSSION

Session 1: Topics for the 2010 round of housing censuses

1. An important issue discussed at the work session was the definition of the dwelling stock to which information on dwellings should be referred. In fact, some countries include in the dwelling stock only occupied conventional dwellings, while others also include vacant dwellings and/or dwellings reserved for seasonal or secondary use, and this clearly affects international comparability of data on dwellings.
2. Following the discussion, the meeting proposed that countries should collect, to the extent possible, data on all dwellings types making up the housing stock. However, to ensure international comparability, all countries should at a minimum report on occupied conventional dwellings.
3. With regard to the occupancy status, it was observed that the term “occupied” dwelling (to indicate a dwelling which is the usual residence of at least one person) in some cases could create confusion, because it could be misunderstood that dwellings which are not “occupied” are vacant, while in fact they could be reserved for seasonal (vacation) or secondary use. To address this problem, some countries proposed to adopt the concept of “main” and “secondary” residence. The meeting agreed that the topic “occupancy status” should be reviewed, taking possibly into consideration the concept of main and secondary residence.
4. With regard to the type of living quarters, the meeting agreed that consideration should be given to classifying people in terms of how they are housed in the broadest sense (including for instance homeless people and those in temporary accommodation). In this respect, people can be divided into those living in conventional dwellings and those in other types of living arrangements.
5. The definition of room in terms of size, use and the presence or not of window(s) was discussed in detail, and it was agreed that the definition should be reviewed. In addition, it was noted that the issue whether the kitchen should be counted as a room or not should also be reviewed, since it appears that the 2000 census recommendations on this subject have not been followed consistently by countries.
6. The meeting observed that the issues of overcrowding and housing consumption are of increasingly relevance. In this regard, it was recommended to review the topics “Number of rooms” and “Useful and/or living floor space” which, together with the number of occupants, allow overcrowding indicators to be calculated.
7. Some countries proposed to consider “Useful and/or living floor space” as a possible core topic (in the 2000 recommendations it was a non-core topic), since this is a very important variable to calculate overcrowding indicators. However, it was observed that in some countries

dwelling size is considered more in terms of number of rooms rather than floor space. Therefore, the quality of information on floor space in these countries would presumably be very low.

8. The meeting agreed that the existing indicators of equipment and amenity standards should be reviewed. For instance, the possibility to include the presence of a cooling system (in addition to the existing categories of heating) should be taken into consideration.

9. It was observed that the possession of durable goods and the availability of cars and parking spaces should not be considered among the equipment and amenities of the dwelling, since they are in fact characteristics of the household, and therefore they are dealt with in the part of the census recommendations on population topics.

10. Access to dwellings was discussed as an emerging area of increasing relevance, in particular in countries with an ageing population and in view of the increasing attention to the needs of persons with disabilities. The meeting agreed that this topic should be considered for possible inclusion in the new census recommendations, on the basis of existing related topics such as the number of floors and the presence of a lift. With regard to the lift, it was noted that this topic should be reviewed, and information should be collected on the presence of a working lift.

11. With regard to the characteristics of buildings containing dwellings, the meeting discussed in detail the classification of building type. It was noted that most countries did not follow the classification presented in the 2000 recommendations. The meeting agreed that this classification should be revised, to better distinguish detached, semi-detached, row (terraced) houses, apartment buildings and others.

Structure of the 2010 recommendations on housing

12. The meeting agreed that the essence of the structure used in the 2000 Recommendations for housing censuses should be retained for the 2010 Recommendations. The part on the housing topics of the draft structure of the 2010 census recommendations proposed by the meeting is presented in Annex II.

Future work

13. The meeting proposed that the work on the new recommendations should be coordinated by a new Task Force on Housing Census Recommendations (Leading country: United Kingdom). In January 2005 the membership of the Task Force will be finalised and the Terms of Reference will be sent out by the ECE Secretariat to the Task Force's Leader.

14. The Task Force will be expected to submit the first draft text for the new census recommendations by the end of May 2005. After review of the first draft by the Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses, a second draft will be prepared by the Task Force by the end of August 2005, so that it could be translated in time for the discussion at the ECE-Eurostat meeting on Population and Housing Censuses tentatively planned for December 2005.

ANNEX II

Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Housing in the ECE Region

Detailed Table of Contents

Draft version including comments and proposals made
at the Work Session on Housing Censuses (26 November 2004)
NOTE: comments are in *italic*; new sections or topics are in **bold**.

IV. HOUSING TOPICS

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSING UNITS AND OTHER LIVING QUARTERS

- 1.1 Type of living quarters (core topic)
- 1.2 Type of ownership (core topic)
- 1.3 Location of living quarters (core topic)
- 1.4 Occupancy status (core topic)
 - *Distinction between occupied and vacant dwellings to be explored further, bearing in mind main and secondary residences*
- 1.5 Type of vacancy (non-core topic)
- 1.6 Occupancy by one or more households (non-core topic)
- 1.7 Number of occupants (core topic)
- 1.8 Number of rooms (core topic)
 - *Definition of room to be reviewed in the context of dimension, use and presence or not of window(s)*
 - *Should kitchen be counted as a room?*
- 1.9 Useful and/or living floor space (non-core topic) **Should this be a core topic?**
 - *Topic to be reviewed (see above comment)*
 - *As the number of rooms, to be considered as an indicator of overcrowding.*
- 1.10 Kitchen (core topic)
- 1.11 Cooking facilities (non-core topic)
- 1.12 Water supply system (core topic)
- 1.13 Hot water (non-core topic)
- 1.14 Toilet facilities (core topic)
- 1.15 Type of sewage disposal system (non-core topic)
- 1.16 Bathing facilities (core topic)
- 1.17 Type of heating (core topic)
 - **Methods of cooling to be added to the existing categories of heating?**
 - *The existing indicators of equipment and amenity standards to be reviewed.*
- 1.18 Main type of energy used for heating (non-core topic)

- 1.19 Electricity (non-core topic)
- 1.20 Piped gas (non-core topic)
- 1.21 Position of dwelling in the building (non-core topic)
- 1.22 Access to housing area (building, dwelling, via for example number of floors and presence of working lifts) (possible new topic)**
 - *This is an emerging area in the context of an ageing population and persons with disabilities.*

2 CHARACTERISTICS OF BUILDINGS CONTAINING DWELLINGS

- 2.1 Type of building (core topic)
 - *Revise classification, to better distinguish detached, semi-detached, row (terraced) houses, apartment buildings and others*
- 2.2 Number of floors (storeys) (non-core topic)
- 2.3 Number of dwellings in the building (non-core topic)
- 2.4 Whether building is a farm building or not (non-core topic)
- 2.5 Lift (non-core topic)
 - *Change to working lift*
- 2.6 Period of construction (core topic)
- 2.7 Materials of which specific parts of the building are constructed (non-core topic)
- 2.8 State of repair (non-core topic)
