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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia****REPORT****WORKSHOP ON 2006 POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS IN EGYPT  
CAIRO, 18-20 APRIL 2005****Summary**

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in cooperation with the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics in Egypt (CAPMAS), the sub-regional office for North Africa of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), organized the Workshop on 2006 Population and Housing Census in Egypt, Cairo from 18 to 20 April 2005.

Discussion focused on the following: (a) the methodology and steps required for implementation of the population and housing census intended to be carried out in 2006; (b) the basic topics the census must address in order to meet the needs of the Government and users of data necessary for the planning and development process; (c) the use of new technology for data collection and processing.

The discussions resulted in recommendations with regard to the review of some of the definitions used in census questionnaires and the use of optical character recognition technique.

This report contains the most important points raised in the discussion, and the resulting recommendations.

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## **Introduction**

1. ESCWA, in cooperation with CAPMAS, the ILO subregional office for North Africa and UNFPA organized the Workshop on 2006 Population and Housing Census in Egypt Cairo, from 18 to 20 April 2005. The aim was to review the methodology and steps in the implementation of the 2006 population, housing and establishment census, with a view to obtaining precise and timely data on the demographic, social and economic characteristics of the population in Egypt at lowest cost and less time as as possible.

### **I. WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. Participants were divided into three working groups, each of which considered a specific issue of the census questionnaires and made a number of observations.

3. The first working group considered the topics covered by the household questionnaire (with the exception of housing conditions) and the post-enumeration survey, and made the following observations:

(a) The week prior to the census should be considered the reference period for the economic characteristics of residents, and that should be clearly stated in the questionnaire;

(b) Consideration should be given to the feasibility of including a category marked “no relationship” in column 2 (“relationship to the head of the family”); that should be proposed to the census technical committee;

(c) The category “newly unemployed” should be replaced by “unemployed not previously worked”, and it should be clarified whether a person working for others without pay is to be considered economically active or inactive;

(d) A new category should be added to column 10 to cover the position of persons working from or at home, in such occupations as weaving clothes at home or marketing goods and using their home as an office;

(e) The question about occupation, in column 13, should be placed before the question in column 12 concerning main economic activity;

(f) The two categories of seasonal work and casual work in column 14 should be clarified in order to make it obvious that seasonal work refers to Egypt’s well-known agricultural seasons, whereas casual work includes the building and construction work;

(g) Table 3 contains the following question: “Does the family include any individual who has had for a long period (six months or more) a motor, sensory or mental problem which prevents him from leading a normal independent life?” That question covers all individuals who face difficulties in their daily lives. The question however includes categories which are not in line with the meaning to specify the nature of the handicap as blindness, lack of one eye and deafness are severe disabilities rather than motor, sensory or mental problems. That error must be corrected and the question put as follows:

- (i) Does [the individual] suffer from any bodily, health, intellectual or psychological difficulty which has lasted, or is expected to last, six months or more, and which impedes him or her from carrying out his or her daily activities in a normal way, either at home or outside? Yes or no.

If yes, choose one of the following difficulties:

- Seeing difficulty even if wearing glasses;
- Hearing difficulty even if using hearing aid;
- Movement difficulty (walking, climbing steps, standing);
- Memory or concentration difficulty;
- Difficulty caring for self (bathing, getting dressed);
- Speech difficulty;

- (ii) Does [the individual] require personal or mechanical assistance to deal with the difficulties mentioned? Yes or no.

If yes, what is the cause of the difficulty?

- (a) Congenital      (b) Illness      (c) Accident      (d) Old age

(h) In column 15, concerning marital status, the category “separated”, which applies only to Christians, should be added;

- (i) Question 16, concerning physical state, is unnecessary;

(j) The phrase “permanent residence” should be added to the question concerning the duration of residence;

(k) Only periods of less than six months/less than/one year should be considered “temporary residence abroad”;

- (l) It is essential that the post-enumeration survey is carried out for the 2006 census.

4. The second working group considered the topics of housing conditions, on the basis of the questionnaires on the household, housing conditions, and establishments, and made the following observations:

- (a) Regarding the questionnaire on housing conditions:

- (i) The word “Butagas” should be replaced by the phrase “Butagas gas used”;
- (ii) “Iron” should be replaced by “radio”;
- (iii) There should only be one category for “television” and one for “washing machine”;
- (iv) The number of persons, by sex, using the Internet should be added to the category “Internet connection”;
- (v) The number of mobile phones should be specified in the category “Mobile phone”;
- (vi) The number of means of transport owned by the household should be specified;
- (vii) The total number of household appliances should be specified, if possible.

- (b) Regarding the questionnaire on establishments:

- (i) In column 6, concerning the sector to which the establishment belongs, the current options should be replaced by the following:

- (a) Government      (b) Public      (c) Private (investment)      (d) private
- (e) Combined (private and public)      (f) Cooperative      (g) NGO      (h) Other

- (ii) As regards the information and communication devices owned by the establishment (column 11), the working group suggested that the following options should be added:

- (a) Has a local area network      (b) Has its own website
- (c) Connected to the Internet      (d) Has an intranet

5. The third working group discussed the use of optical scanners in data entry, and made the following observations:

(a) Capacity-building is essential for all staff during all stages of the census, training should be continuous, given the importance of accurate census results;

(b) Particular attention should be given to in-office review and to the accuracy of the data, given that the time saved by using optical scanning in data entry could be largely offset by error correction and checking for coverage;

(c) An automated system should be used to check the quality of the data, including during the stages of the in-office review and data processing, in order to improve the standard of accuracy at all stages of the census;

(d) The feasibility of renting optical scanning devices and procuring the maintenance contract on the local market, if available, should be explored in order to reduce the purchase cost;

(e) High priority should be given to the printing of the forms and their transport to the point of use, in order to ensure that the standard and precision of data input through optical scanning is maintained. In that respect, the following recommendations were made:

(i) The optical scanning team should participate with CAPMAS in supervising the print quality of the forms;

(ii) Containers should be provided in which the forms are kept while they are transported by the enumerator. The forms should be kept in cardboard or plastic boxes after the in-office review and automatic processing;

(f) Extra staff, forms and equipment should be held in reserve in order to support the census operation and deal with any problems that may arise during the actual enumeration;

(g) Before final printing, some forms should be made available to the optical scanning team for testing;

(h) All the census forms must be kept together and put in one data storage facility; the technical and material support required for that operation must be made available;

(i) All workers should be given a material incentive in order to ensure that high quality data is acquired;

(j) Once the census has been carried out, ESCWA should be invited to organize regional workshops in one of its member countries, in order to make use of lessons learned and the innovative census-taking strategies and advanced methods.

## **II. ISSUES DISCUSSED**

### **A. METHODOLOGY OF IMPLEMENTING THE POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS IN EGYPT**

6. Three papers were presented on this topic, dealing with the importance of using census data in formulating population policy, the methodology used in implementing the population and housing census in Egypt, and the related use of geographical information systems.

7. Ms. Bosina El-Deeb, head of the Statistics Sector in CAPMAS, presented a paper on the use of population census results in obtaining demographic and economic indicators useful for the development process. The paper emphasised the importance of censuses in obtaining indicators based on a complete coverage of every individual in society. Some of the most important indicators included the distribution of

population by age, sex and marital status; marriage and divorce rates; illiteracy rates; the breakdown of the population by economic activity, employment status and occupation; unemployment rates; prevalence rates of disabilities and the types and causes thereof; the availability of clean water, and sanitation. The census is also an opportunity to acquire data on such phenomena as internal and external migration and its flows.

8. Mr. Muhammad Ahmad Abd Al-Karim, head of Central Department of Census, and Mr. Muhammad Abd Al-Galil Al-Dasouqi, General Director of Population Censuses, presented a paper on the methodology of implementing the 2006 population and housing census in Egypt, in which they discussed the preparatory work for the census, the questionnaires, the definitions used, the stages of fieldwork, the breakdown of administrative work, and the evaluation and control of the quality of census data. An outline was given of the innovative methods being employed in the census, including the use of sophisticated forms for data collection and the decentralization of all census-related work, including receipt of records of completed questionnaires, in-office review, automatic data processing and the use of the geographical information system.

9. Mr. Mustafa Muhammad Ahmad, of CAPMAS Deputy Ministry, presented a paper on the use of geographical information systems in the population and housing census. He discussed the important part played by such systems in censuses and emphasized their role in data analysis and processing with a view to developing strategies for the delivery of public services in line with population distribution and urban development.

10. Mr. Muhammad Abd Al-Galil Al-Dasouqi, in a presentation on the topics and definitions used in the household and housing conditions questionnaire, discussed the demographic and geographical characteristics it covers. The topics include relationship with the head of the household, place of birth, place and duration of residence; demographic characteristics, including sex, age, religion, nationality, and marital status, and housing conditions, including type of residence, number of rooms, household appliances, sanitation, water facilities and water source, and means of lighting.

11. He also dealt with the social characteristics covered in the household and housing conditions questionnaire, and discussed the definitions of education, including dropouts, and disability and the types and causes thereof. The head of the Statistics Coordination Unit at ESCWA, set out some of the questions which the Washington Group on Disability Statistics is currently formulating on disability, and recommended that they be used in the census form. Those questions seek to establish the difficulties the individual faces in accomplishing everyday activities; there are four basic questions concerning seeing, hearing, movement and memory, in addition to two supplementary questions about care for oneself and the ability to speak.

12. In addition, he outlined the economic characteristics of the population that are covered in the questionnaire through questions on economic activity, occupation, place of work and sector. During that presentation, Mr. Robert Pember of ILO set out the particular definitions involved, emphasizing the importance of the census as the primary source of data on the economically active population. He discussed the various questions relating to economic activity in the 2006 census form, and stressed the need to measure economic activity for all those aged six years and over, list the activities undertaken in the week prior to the census, and use of international classifications in formulating questions relating to work, employment and unemployment. He recommended using the report of the United Nations Statistics Division and ILO entitled *Collection of economic characteristics in population censuses* (Technical Report ST/ESA/STAT/119).

#### B. USE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY IN DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING

13. Ms. Nivine Hijazi, an engineer in the Information Technology Sector of CAPMAS, presented a paper on the use of an optical scanning system to enter data, and discussed developments in the automatic data processing stage of the 2006 census. The paper covered a number of basic issues, including the data entry stage involving design of the forms and use of an optical scanner, the automated encoding of the original descriptive data, decentralization, use of a data store and research. She referred to the main challenges posed by optical scanning, the most important being the quality of the printing and the paper used for the forms, selection of a scanning device on the basis of its speed and its capacity for dealing with automatic input, and the selection on the basis of accuracy of scanning software from among the numerous different available

models. She stated that CAPMAS had carried out a number of trials during the past three years prior to the census operation in order to establish the feasibility of using optical scanning.

14. Mr. Abd Elah Zerrou, head of the population statistics and civil status section in the Moroccan Directorate of Statistics, then presented the experience of Morocco in using optical character scanning for data collection and processing. He discussed the three stages in that process, namely, (a) printing the forms, (b) processing the forms, and (c) verifying and documenting the results. The processing of the forms involves receiving the documents, checking the content of the boxes, preparing the forms for scanning, optical character scanning, and preliminary on-screen encoding.

### C. DATA DISSEMINATION AND IMPORTANCE OF CARRYING OUT A POST-ENUMERATION SURVEY

15. The head of Statistics Coordination Unit at ESCWA discussed the dissemination of the population and housing census results. He indicated that the dissemination strategy depends on knowing the characteristics of data users and the dissemination methods available, whether traditional or modern. He outlined the advantages of the geographical information system, which he described as a means of disseminating the census data, and its software and equipment requirements. He discussed the database, which contains indicators, time series data and geographical areas, and can be used to disseminate various indicators and data.

16. Mr. Ali Bin Mahboub reviewed Oman's experience of carrying out its 2003 population and housing census. He covered all stages of the census operation, including the preparation of maps and census forms, fieldwork, the use of optical character scanning in data collection, and the use of the media to raise awareness of the importance of taking part in the census. He remarked that the Ministry of National Economy, which was the body charged with carrying out the census, had established a special Internet census site and had set time aside each day to disseminate the count results directly from the operations room. In addition, it used short messages and organized seminars in schools, sports clubs and women's groups.

17. Mr. Magdi Abd Al-Qadir Ibrahim, of the Cairo Demographic Center, presented a paper on the importance of a post-enumeration survey in evaluating the census operation. He pointed to the role of the post-enumeration survey in determining how accurate the data are, both in terms of complete coverage and enumeration and in their specifics. The post-enumeration survey is carried out immediately after the census field survey by re-enumerating an adequate sample of households. He set out the most important elements in the post-enumeration survey, namely, the timing of the survey, its accuracy and independence, and verification in cases of inconsistency. He then presented the results of the 1986 post-enumeration survey, where the average non-completion rate was 6.23 per cent. Results were most consistent in relation to sex and marital status and least consistent in relation to age.

## III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

### A. VENUE OF THE WORKSHOP

18. The Workshop was held in the Marriott Hotel, Cairo, from 18 to 20 April 2005.

### B. OPENING

19. Statements were made at the opening session by Mr. Ibrahim Awad, director of the ILO subregional office for North Africa; Mr. Faisal Abd Al-Rahman, representative of UNFPA; General Abu Bakr Al-Jundi, President of CAPMAS; Ms. Mervat Tallawy, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCWA; and Mr. Uthman Muhammad Uthman, Minister of Planning of Egypt.

20. The statements affirmed both the intention of the United Nations to combine efforts of all parties in support of its Member States and the importance of the census as a major national undertaking and the principal source of the data required by decision makers and policy makers. Ms. Mervat Tallawy noted that

the Workshop coincided with the launching by the United Nations of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, the aim of which is to agree on a number of principles and recommendations for the implementation of censuses, and encourage countries to publish census data and provide it to users without delay. The speakers hoped that the Workshop would play a part in suggesting the basic questions that the census in Egypt should cover and in discussing the modalities of employing technology in the data gathering and processing operations.

21. General Abu Bakr Al-Jundi pointed to the necessity of learning from the experience of the previous census and of determining national requirements for the data necessary to carry out studies, as well as the pressing needs of researchers and organizations that use census data. He also affirmed the importance of looking into latest developments in field research methods.

#### C. PARTICIPANTS

22. The Workshop was attended by participants from CAPMAS and other Government ministries and departments, and representatives of the private sector, the media and the universities. Experts from ILO, UNFPA, the Office for National Statistics in the United Kingdom, Oman and Morocco also attended. The list of participants is included in the annex of this report.



## Annex

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