

UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL



52428

Distr.  
LIMITED



E/CN.14/CAS.5/6  
5 July 1967

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA  
Fifth Conference of African Statisticians  
Addis Ababa, 30 October - 10 November 1967

PREPARATIONS FOR THE 1970 POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUSES  
IN AFRICA

M67-874

1944  
1945  
1946  
1947  
1948  
1949  
1950  
1951  
1952  
1953  
1954  
1955  
1956  
1957  
1958  
1959  
1960  
1961  
1962  
1963  
1964  
1965  
1966  
1967  
1968  
1969  
1970  
1971  
1972  
1973  
1974  
1975  
1976  
1977  
1978  
1979  
1980  
1981  
1982  
1983  
1984  
1985  
1986  
1987  
1988  
1989  
1990  
1991  
1992  
1993  
1994  
1995  
1996  
1997  
1998  
1999  
2000  
2001  
2002  
2003  
2004  
2005  
2006  
2007  
2008  
2009  
2010  
2011  
2012  
2013  
2014  
2015  
2016  
2017  
2018  
2019  
2020  
2021  
2022  
2023  
2024  
2025

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY

1944

PREPARATIONS FOR THE 1970 POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUSES  
IN AFRICA

This paper reviews progress to date and future plans for the implementation of the 1970 round of censuses of population and housing, with the intention of drawing to the attention of the Fifth Conference of African Statisticians certain recent developments which should assist and encourage countries in the conduct of their national censuses.

United Nations Sponsorship

2. The 1970 census programme is a worldwide programme sponsored by the United Nations and having as its essential aim the provision of the basic demographic data required for planning and research in national economic and social development, and, complementarily, the provision of uniform statistics required for the assessment of housing conditions and the formulation of housing programmes designed to raise standards in this particular aspect of living.

3. The United Nations sponsorship of this programme consists of a number of related activities, amongst which may be cited (a) the formulation of international and regional principles and recommendations for producing the kind of data considered necessary for development planning; (b) promotion of improved methods of census organisation and operations through provision of (i) methodological handbook and technical manuals, and (ii) various forms of technical assistance, including training; (c) promotion of current population and housing statistics; and (d) international dissemination of national census results in comparable form.

4. This is a long term programme which has been under continuous review and development since the 1950 world census round; the international recommendations and the types of technical assistance offered to countries have been modified for each successive census round by taking into account national census experience in all countries in all regions and the views of all countries on the suitability of draft recommendations submitted to national statistical offices and to bodies such as the Conferences of Statisticians.

#### International Activities in the African Region

5. In Africa, the activities already completed and those envisaged for the remainder of the period 1965-74 are of the same kind as those undertaken in Europe, in Asia and the Far East, and in Latin America. In every case, the procedures can be grouped into two main lines of action: (i) the formulation of principles and recommendations on the types of data to be collected and the means of organising their collection and (ii) implementation of the recommendations. From the United Nations viewpoint, the latter consists largely of the provision of technical assistance in the form of national and regional census advisers and of census training projects.

#### Formulation of Census Recommendations

6. These recommendations have been circulated in draft form in the Report of the Second Working Group on Censuses of Population and Housing, E/CN.14/CAS.5/CPH/8. This Working Group, which met in Addis Ababa from 22 February to 4 March 1966, took into consideration the recommendations contained in the draft versions of the United Nations world recommendations on censuses of population and housing (United Nations documents E/CN.3/330 and E/CN.3/332 respectively), the findings of the First Working Group, which met in Addis Ababa in June 1965, and of the Fourth Conference of African Statisticians, held in November 1965. The conclusions reached by the Working Groups and the Conference of African Statisticians have been restated by the secretariat of the

Economic Commission in the form of a set of recommendations for use in African censuses, similar in format to the world recommendations, but specifically adapted to African conditions.

7. They are presented to the Conference in the documents entitled African Recommendations for the 1970 Population Censuses, E/CN.14/CAS.5/CPH/9 and African Recommendations for the 1970 Housing censuses, E/CN.14/CAS.5/CPH/10. They set out in a more complete and systematic way than could be done in the Report of the Second Working Group recommendations on topics to be investigated, on definitions of the underlying concepts, on tabulations and the classifications to be adopted therein.

8. Three basic assumptions have been retained in the process of evolving the recommendations:

- (i) the census should be viewed as part of an integrated plan for statistical development in individual countries;
- (ii) national needs take priority, but, where applicable, international comparability should be maintained;
- (iii) high standards of reliability must be set, and to achieve this it is necessary to conduct pre-tests to ensure a suitable census design and post-enumeration checks to measure the reliability of the data obtained.

9. In arriving at their conclusions, the Working Groups and the Fourth Conference of African Statisticians had at their disposal the results of several years of research by the secretariat and the findings of a number of technical meetings, covering a wide variety of topics, including the need for particular types of demographic data, the difficulties of establishing a continuous integrated system of data collection, conceptual and definitional problems, and studies of field projects of an experimental nature. Amongst these topics may be mentioned the detailed reviews of African experience in the 1960 round of population and housing censuses, studies of the problems

of investigating economic characteristics of the population, of marital status and of enumerating nomads. Major emphasis has also been given to the related problem of obtaining reliable data on vital events pending the improvement of civil registration systems, and, more recently, on migratory movements. An impetus to the achievement of better housing statistics, both from censuses and from current records, has been provided by the Seminar on Housing Statistics and Programmes in Africa, held in Copenhagen in September 1966.

#### Implementation of the Census Programme

10. With the conceptual framework now prepared, the major task will be assistance to countries in the conduct of their national censuses. This can be and will be partly achieved by continuing the past practice of supplying census advisers for long-term assignments to requesting countries, and through shorter assignments by the regional advisory service, again in response to requests by governments. It is hoped that United Nations assistance to countries will be supplemented, as in the past, by assistance from bilateral sources.

11. However, additional measures are required in order to ensure that each country has a sufficient number of qualified staff to organise and conduct the national censuses to be taken around 1970. To meet this target, two lines of approach are proposed, in conformity with the recommendations submitted to and approved by the Fourteenth Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission which met in Geneva in October 1966. These suggested lines of approach are (i) assistance in setting up national or sub-regional census training centres, and (ii) the organisation in 1968 of a regional seminar on methods of conducting population and housing censuses. The Conference will be invited to consider arrangements for these projects in more detail.

12. Amongst the aspects of training and advice to countries which will be important in the 1970 census round will be cartography and data processing. Advice in these two fields, together with the regional advisory services in demographic statistics and sampling, would make it possible to meet the needs of all the countries of the region.

13. As a first step towards increasing ECA resources for the 1970 census round, United Nations Headquarters has assigned to Addis Ababa an inter-regional adviser in demographic statistics. The circular letter sent to all African statistical offices early this year, announcing the appointment, has resulted in a number of requests which reflect the needs for assistance in this field. It is anticipated that with the appointment of a second regional adviser (additional to the present regional adviser) from October of this year, the Economic Commission will be in a much better position to carry out the various activities of assisting countries to prepare for their national censuses.

#### National Activities

14. Though it is the ultimate aim that all countries of the region should conduct national censuses in the same year, local conditions and the limitations at all levels in the resources available will preclude the achievement of this objective for some time to come. Meanwhile, census taking will continue to spread itself over the ten-year period 1965-74. Some countries have already completed a census (Algeria, Tunisia, Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland in 1966), while plans are in hand for or provisional discussions are being held on census or survey operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Tanzania in 1967, and somewhat later in Cameroon, the Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Gabon, Congo(Brazzaville), Libya, Madagascar, Morocco, Senegal, Zambia and the U.A.R. The Economic Commission would be grateful for any further information, even tentative, on the census plans of other countries, especially since the training programme will necessarily take account of differences in timing and of language in planning the census training courses.

Integration of censuses and current statistics.

15. Because of the difficulty in establishing a system of reliable current statistics which would reveal the level of the components of the rate of growth of population, many African censuses (and intercensal demographic inquiries) are likely to be burdened with inquiries into births, deaths and migration. This is unavoidable for the moment, but provision must be made for future developments aimed at securing reliable current reporting of the relevant events. The national census would be an admirable starting point and it would be to the advantage of countries of the region to consider the possibility of including in their census plans a scheme for the extension and improvement of civil registration, either just before or just after the census itself. A number of technical meetings in Africa have very strongly supported the desirability of such a course, even if local resources are so limited as to make it possible only on a sample basis in the early stages. Plans are in hand in a few countries, and in a few others experimental projects have been in operation for some time. The United Nations is actively sponsoring the improvement of civil registration and will give assistance, on request, for the implementation of country projects.

16. Similar logical considerations apply to the field of housing, and it is hoped that resources may be devoted to instituting effective systems of current reporting in this field.

\*\*\* \*\*