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FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS COLLECTED IN CENSUSES
IN SOME COUNTRIES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA AND INDIAN OCEAN

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FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS COLLECTED IN CENSUSES IN SOME COUNTRIES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA AND INDIAN OCEAN

BY

UNFPA-CST FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

1. Over the years, the United Nations has issued recommendations, handbooks and technical reports in order to improve the quality of censuses around the world and to make the results of censuses as comparable as possible. The main publication of the series is the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses (PRPHC)* adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 1979 and published in 1980.

2. These recommendations have been used by countries in the 1980 and 1990 rounds of censuses. In the area of economic activities, a supplementary *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* has been published for the 1990 round censuses, and Parts I and II of the new edition of Handbook of Population and Housing Censuses have been issued (Part I: Planning, Organization and Administration of Population and Housing Censuses and Part II: Demographic and Social Characteristics).

3. Regarding family and household characteristics, no further development has taken place in the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* or in the new handbook.

4. The paper reminds the existing practices in censuses on household [or family] characteristics as recommended in the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* and presents national practices in some countries in the southern Africa and the Indian Ocean sub-region. It raises in the conclusion some issues on the improvement of census statistics on the topic in order to address the new requirements of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration and the ICPD Programme of Action.

I. EXISTING PRACTICES IN CENSUSES REGARDING FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

5. As many African countries, the countries of the sub-region were more concerned about family and/or household characteristics in the 1990 round censuses than in previous censuses. However, most of the data were derived from identification variables rather than obtained through direct questions on family/households.

A. The concept of family and household in censuses

1. General definition

6. The notions of family and household look similar but in reality they are different. The family can be nucleus or extended. The family nucleus consists of a married couple, which may live with other unmarried persons (relatives or non-relatives except parents of either husband or wife). The extended family consists a married couple (husband and wife) and at least one other married couple or parents of husband or wife, or grand-parents of husband or of wife.

Examples of families include the following:

- single parent or lone parent family
- childless married couple
- married couple with dependent children

7. Generally in censuses, the concept of household is based on the arrangements made by persons, individually or in group, for providing themselves with food (the commonality of cooking and eating arrangements is adopted as the criterion for distinguishing and identifying households). There are two categories of households: the private household and the collective household.

8. A private household generally consists of persons who are related to each other but may include some unrelated persons who live with the household. There can also be households consisting of unrelated persons, for instance persons sharing a house and maintaining common cooking facilities and eating together.

Examples of private households include the following:

- childless non-married adult living alone
- childless non-married adult living with parent (s)
- childless non-married adult living with other persons (relatives or not)

9. Persons who are not identifiable with households and live in collective quarters are categorized as living in collective households (military camps and installations, prisons and other correctional or penal institutions, dormitories of educational or religious institutions, hospitals, etc...).

10. The family is defined as comprising household members related by blood, adoption or marriage and sharing the same housing unit or compound.

11. While a family cannot include more than one household, a household can have more than one family. But in practice, most households comprise only one family (nucleus or extended).

2. Head of household [or family]

12. The head of family or the head of household is defined as that person in the family or in the household who is acknowledged as such by other members of the family or the household.

3. National practices in the sub-region

13. All the countries in the sub-region have adopted the general definitions of family/household, with some variations.

14. In Zimbabwe, the distinction has been made between private households and collective institutions. Here, collective institutions include hotels and holiday camps, which could be handled as private households.

15. The private household was defined as a group of persons who stayed together the census night in a dwelling unit, whether or not related by blood or marriage. It included visitors not usual members of the household but present, and excluded usual household members if they spent the census night elsewhere; night duty workers were counted in their usual household (de facto census).

16. The head of household was defined as the member of the household regarded as such by those who spent the census night in the household: he must have stayed the census night in the household or otherwise have returned on the morning of the census day (first day of enumeration).

17. In South Africa, the household consists of a person or a group of persons (whether related or not) who usually occupy a dwelling or a part thereof and who provide themselves with food and other essentials for living, or have made arrangements for such provision. Visitors, resident employees and lodgers who share meals with the household are regarded as part of the household (de facto census).

18. In Seychelles, the household was defined as a group of persons who usually sleep in the same house and who eat together or from the same food supply, including maids or lodgers living with the family or fed by the family provided that they are not responsible for buying and preparing their own food; if they are, they become separate household (de jure census).

19. In Madagascar, the distinction was made between ordinary private household and incomplete private household. Here, the ordinary private household is defined as a group of persons living in the same building, family related or non-related, acknowledging the authority of one head of household, and sharing the main meals (same cooking facilities).

20. An incomplete household comprises one or several members of a household who occupy a building separated from the head of household's building. The two buildings occupied by the head of household and the members of the incomplete household must be close to each other, otherwise the two households are considered as different ordinary private households.

21. In Malawi, a household consisted of one or more persons related or unrelated who make common provision for food and who regularly take their food from the same pot and/or share the same grain store (nkhokwe) or pool their income together for purpose of purchasing food. Persons in a household may live in one or more dwelling units.

22. The head of household is defined in Malawi as a person among the household members who is acknowledged by other members of the same household as their head. She/he is often the one who takes most decisions concerning the welfare of the members of the household. In case of a household consisting of unrelated persons, either one of them but only one should be considered as the head.

B. Family/household data collection procedures in censuses

1. The importance of the family/household unit in the census enumeration

23. The primary unit for enumeration in a population census is the individual. However, the individual is generally identified by association with the family or the household to which he belongs. The family or the household is therefore adopted as an additional unit of enumeration. The careful identification of this unit as a step to enumeration will facilitate the efficient collection of data and assure that coverage is complete. This can be done before or during the enumeration. From the definition seen above, it is clear that the household and the family cannot be used together as unit of enumeration in the same census.

24. In some instances, it is very difficult to make the differentiation of households within the extended family group. In such cases, the family has been adopted as additional unit of enumeration. However, the family nucleus makes no confusion whether the household or the family is used as the unit of enumeration.

25. The use of composite household form as the principal questionnaire for data collection is the general practice leading to a single questionnaire for each household, which has the advantage of easy handling in the field. Also, all members of the household can be listed first before the individual interview, which reduces chance of omission of household members, particularly when listing household members in order of relationship to head.

26. The use of household questionnaire instead of individual questionnaire enhances the possibilities of tabulation that reflects the characteristics of both the individuals and the household characteristics and cross tabulation. This also simplifies the data processing.

2. Household [or family] characteristics within the set of recommended census topics

27. Only two topics are recommended in the *Handbook of Population and Housing Census* under "Household [or family] characteristics:

i) **Relationship to head or other reference member of household [or family]** (Topic that appears on the questionnaire)

ii) **Household [or family] composition** (Derived topic)

28. As regards the **relationship to head** or other reference member of the household or family, the general practice is to first identify the head and then classify the remaining members according to their relationship to the head. When the members of the family/household are unable to identify their head, clear instructions should be given to the enumerators to do so. A more or less detailed classification according to the relationship to head is then adopted as appropriate in the following order:

- spouse
- child
- spouse of child
- grandchild or great-grandchild
- parent (or parent of spouse)
- other relative
- domestic employee
- other person not related to head

29. In order to facilitate identification of family nuclei, it is advisable that persons appear in the questionnaire to the extent possible in the order of nuclear relationship: spouse, unmarried children of spouse, married children of spouse followed by their spouses and children, etc.

30. For census purposes, it is recommended that **household and family composition** takes into account the family nucleus as the primary aspect to consider. In this respect, some arrangements are helpful to identify this unit within the household. However, this identification is likely to be more complete in de jure census than in de facto enumeration (problem of temporary absent members of the household).

31. According to the Principles, households should be classified by type according to the number of family nuclei they contain and the relationship, if any, between the family nuclei and the other members of the household. The types of household to be distinguished should be:

- One-person household
- Nuclear household (consisting entirely of a single family nucleus)
- Extended household consisting of either:
 - a single family nucleus and other persons related to the nucleus;
 - Two or more family nuclei related to each other, without any other persons;
 - Two or more family nuclei related to each other, plus other persons related to at least one of the nuclei; or
 - Two or more persons related to each other but none of whom comprises a family nucleus;
- Composite household, consisting of either:

- A single family nucleus plus other persons, some of whom are related to the nucleus and some of whom are not;
- A single family nucleus plus other persons, none of whom is related to the nucleus;
- Two or more family nuclei related to each other plus other persons, some of whom are related to at least one of the nuclei and some of whom are not related to any of the nuclei;
- Two or more family nuclei related to each other plus other persons none of whom is related to any of the nuclei;
- Two or more family nuclei related to each other, with or without other persons;
- Two or more persons related to each other but none of whom comprises a family nucleus, plus other unrelated persons; or
- Non-related persons only.

32. The following information can also be included in family/household information collected during the census:

- iii) **Live births in the family/household within the 12 months preceding the census**
- iv) **Deaths in the family/household within the 12 months preceding the census**

3. National practices

33. All the countries of the sub-region have adopted the household questionnaire for the census.

34. In Zimbabwe, the relationship to head of household was used. The order of listing household members was the following:

- Head, spouse, unmarried children
- Married children, their spouses and children
- Relatives of head
- Non-relatives
- Visitors

However, six modalities of the relationship to head of household were recorded on the questionnaire, namely:

- 1) Head
- 2) Spouse
- 3) Son/Daughter
- 4) Parent
- 5) Other relative
- 6) Not-related.

Households were classified by type as follows:

- one person household
- nucleus household (single family nucleus)
- extended household (single family nucleus and other persons related to the family nucleus)
- composite household (at least one single family nucleus plus other persons who may or may not be related to the family nucleus).

Deaths occurred in the household in the last 12 months were collected as household information.

35. In South Africa, members of the household were also related to head of household. Relationship to head of household had 9 modalities:

- 1) Head
- 2) Spouse
- 3) Child
- 4) Grandchild
- 5) Other relative
- 6) Non relative
- 7) Domestic worker/domestic worker's relatives/visitors
- 8) Visitor
- 9) Foreign visitor

The following distinctions were made within the households:

- Single
- nuclear family
- single/nuclear family and:
 - no one else
 - unmarried children
 - married children with or without children
 - parent (s)
 - other relatives

 - other nuclear family (ies)
 - non related persons

Deaths occurred in the household in the last 12 months were also collected as household information.

36. In Madagascar, members of households were related to head of household. Household members were classified in the following order:

- Head
- Spouse
- Children
- Grandchildren
- Parents
- Grandparents
- Other relatives
- Non relatives

Examples of ordinary households were:

- a couple living alone or with their married or unmarried children
- a spouse living alone or with married or unmarried children
- a couple or a spouse with or without their children, living with parents or other relatives or persons
- brothers and sisters living together
- friends living together
- a person living alone and assuring his own subsistence.

Examples of incomplete households were:

- elderly persons living alone in a building, but whose means of subsistence are provided by a member of their family living in the same quarter and in a nearby building
- unmarried children living alone in a separate building near to their parents' building.

37. Live births in the household within the 12 months preceding the census were collected only if the mothers had deceased, and deaths occurred in the household in the last 12 months were collected as household information.

38. In Malawi, the relationship to head of household was asked to each member of the household and recorded according to five modalities:

- 1) Head
- 2) Spouse
- 3) Child
- 4) Other relative
- 5) Non-relative

39. Household information included household economic activities such as type of business/cash crop farming, whether activity carried out during last 12 months, total months of activity, number of household members engaged in each activity, number of workers hired to work on a regular basis and number of casual workers.

40. Deaths occurred in the household in the last 12 months were collected as household information. They included deaths of household members occurring in dwelling units belonging to the household and deaths of household members occurring in the hospital/clinic, or on the way to hospital/clinic, or as a result of an accident.

II. CENSUS OUTPUTS ON FAMILY/HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

A. Census statistical tables on family/households characteristics

1. Recommended tables on household characteristics

41. The following census tables on household characteristics are recommended ^{1/}:

- *1) Population in household by relationship to head or other reference member of household, marital status and sex, and number of institutional population
- 2) Heads or other reference members of household by age and sex, and other household members by age and relationship to head or other reference member
- 3) Heads or other reference members of households ... years of age and over by activity status, status in employment and sex, and other household members ... years of age and over by relationship to head or other reference member and activity status
- *4) Households, population in households and number of family nuclei, by size of household
- *5) Households and population in households by size and type of household
- 6) Multiperson households and population in such households, by type and size of households
- 7) Multiperson households with one or more family nuclei and population in such households, by type of household and family nucleus and by size of household
- 8) Households and population in households by size of household and number of economically active members
- 9) Households and population in households by size of household and number of members under ... years of age
- *10) Households by broad types of living quarters and number of homeless households
- *11) Households occupying housing units by type of housing unit
- *12) Households in housing units by type of housing unit, cross-classified by type of household
- 13) Households in collective living quarters by type of living quarters
- *14) Households by type of living quarters, cross-classified by sex and age of head of household
- *15) Household by type of living quarters, cross-classified by type of activity, occupation and sex of head of household

^{1/} (*) = First priority table

- 16) Homeless households by sex and age of head of household, cross-classified by type of activity
- *17) Households in housing units by type of housing unit occupied, cross-classified by number of households and number of rooms per housing unit
- *18) Households in housing units by type of housing unit, cross-classified by tenure of household and, for tenant households, ownership of housing unit occupied
- 19) Households in housing unit by type of housing unit, cross-classified by type of owner of the housing unit, availability of piped water and availability of toilet facilities in the housing unit
- 20) Renting households in dwellings by rent paid, cross-classified by type of owner of the dwelling, furnished or unfurnished and tenure of the household
- *21) Renting households, classified by whether space occupied is furnished or unfurnished and amount of rent paid monthly by the household, cross-classified by type of housing unit and number of households in the housing unit.

2. National practices

42. In the sub-region, census tabulation on household [or family] characteristics is rather poor compared to the amount of data available and that can be derived from census questionnaires. However, much efforts have been made in some countries, especially those having conducted a de jure population and housing census, to obtain more detailed tabulation on household characteristics. In other countries, a certain amount of data collected has not been tabulated with much details.

43. In Madagascar (1993 de jure census), household data obtained include number of households, number of family nuclei and number of cases of deaths in households. The following tables on household characteristics are being produced:

- 1) Households by age and sex and marital status of head of household
- 2) Households by size, sex and marital status of head of household and number of occupied rooms in the housing unit
- 3) Households by size according to sex, marital status and school attainment of head of household
- 4) Households by size according to sex, marital status and level of education of head of household
- 5) Households by size according to sex, marital status and literacy of head of household
- 6) Households by size according to sex, marital status and work status of head of household
- 7) Households by size according to sex, marital status and occupation of head of household
- 8) Households by size according to sex, marital status and employment status of head of household
- 9) Households by size according to sex, marital status and industry of head of household
- 10) Households by size according to sex, marital status of head of household and tenure status of the housing unit

- 11) Households by age, sex and relationship to head of household members
- 12) Households by marital status of head and type of household [or family]
- 13) Households by type of housing, type of lightning, source of energy for cooking, water supply, toilet facilities and existence of a kitchen in the housing unit

44. In Zimbabwe (1992 de facto census), data obtained included population in households, number of private households and average household size. The following tables on household characteristics were issued:

- 1) Number of households by status of tenure by province and district, urban/rural and main urban areas
- 2) Households by type of dwelling unit by province and district, urban/rural and main urban areas
- 3) Number of households with dwelling units with electricity by province and district, urban/rural and main urban areas
- 4) Number of households by main source of water for drinking and cooking by province and district, urban/rural and main urban areas
- 5) Number of households by type of toilet facility most used by the household by province and district, urban/rural and main urban areas
- 6) Number of households by source of energy most used by the household for cooking by province and district, urban/rural and main urban areas
- 7) Total population by size of private households and sex by province and district, urban/rural and main urban areas
- 8) Head of private households by sex and age by province and district, urban/rural and main urban areas
- 9) Number of private households by size and by sex of head of household by province and district
- 10) Population in private households by relationship to head of household and marital status and sex by province and district, urban/rural and main urban areas
- 11) Institutional population (population in collective households) by age group, marital status and sex by province and district, urban/rural and main urban areas
- 12) Deaths in the last 12 months in the households by province and district and urban/rural areas
- 13) Maternal deaths in the households for females aged 12-49 years during last 12 months by province and district.

45. In Seychelles (1994 de jure census), the following tables on household characteristics have been produced:

- 1) Population in private households by relation to head, sex and marital status
- 2) Heads of household by age, sex and marital status (country, island, district)
- 3) Other household members by age, sex and relationship to head of household
- 4) Heads of household 15 years of years and over by sex and work status
- 5) Other members of the household 15 years of years and over by sex, relation to head of household and work status

- 6) Households and population in households by size of household
- 7) Households by size, sex and marital status of head of household
- 8) Households and population occupying houses by main type of material used for house construction [stone/block, wood/iron, palm/lattice] and physical condition of the houses [good, fair, poor]
- 9) Households by main type of construction material of the house, age and sex of the head of household
- 10) Households by main type of construction material of the house, work status and sex of the head of household
- 11) Households by main type of construction material of the house, marital status and sex of the head of household
- 12) Households by physical condition of the house, age and sex of the head of household
- 13) Households by physical condition of the house, work status and sex of the head of household
- 14) Households by physical condition of the house, marital status and sex of the head of household

B. Family/household data analysis

46. Census data analysis on household characteristics should study the household structure and composition and the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of head of household [or of family]. A combination of household and housing characteristics analysis can be very useful in the study of living conditions of the population.

47. In the sub-region, few countries have attempted to analyze in depth household characteristics. The study is often limited to the review of the average size of the household and the household headship rate.

48. In the census national report of Zimbabwe (1992 census), a short chapter has been assigned to the description and summary analysis of household characteristics. The analysis covered both private and collective households. For the private households, the aspects briefly analyzed were the average size of the household, size of the household and sex of head, age and sex structure of heads of household, relationship to head and marital status, household headship and marital status and a brief study of household by sector of residence. The study on collective households covered only the population by broad age group.

49. Madagascar (1993 *de jure* census) and Comoros (1991 *de jure* census) are intending to analyze household and housing characteristics in a whole volume. The following topics will be studied, among others:

- Household characteristics
 - Household size
 - Household structure and composition
- Demographic characteristics of heads of household
 - Age and sex structure

- Marital status
- Educational level
- Economic activity
- Cross analysis with other variables

- Headship rates

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

50. The only direct question ask so far in censuses to collect family and household information is the *relationship to head or other reference member of household [or family]*. The obtention of reliable and complete information on family and household therefore implies a clear definition of the concept according to the local conditions and taking into account international comparability. In this respect, additional questions may be necessary.

51. Besides, derived useful information can only be obtained if sufficient provision is made in that respect at the pre-enumeration (mapping, pre-listing), enumeration (family and household identification) and processing (manual and computer assisted coding and editing, tabulation) stages of the census.

52. Given the fact that the family structure may have changed since the two previous censuses decades and the present importance of family and household data, there is a need for more development of the census concepts, data collection procedures and questions as well as data processing, tabulation and analysis to obtain more relevant information on family and household structure and characteristics.

53. Furthermore, there have been new developments and other requirements that should be addressed and included in the revised PRPHC for the 2000 round censuses, particularly taking into account the data needs arising from the Dakar-Ngor Declaration, the ICPD Programme of Action and the new post-Cairo UNFPA Programme Framework. Family and Household Characteristics should be part of these inclusions as they have many implications regarding Gender issues, Population and Development Strategies and Reproductive Health including Family Planning and Sexual Health.

54. The concept of family should be better defined and more taken into consideration in censuses as "the family, as an essential component of the economic and social fabric, requires the pursuit of appropriate strategies, adapted to family services, which should themselves, form an integral part of population and development policies which address the needs of all members, especially adolescents" (Dakar-Ngor Declaration, Principle (c)).

55. The family is the basic unit of society and as such should be strengthened. It is entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support. In different cultural, political and social systems, various forms of families exist. Marriage must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouses, and husband and wife should be equal partners" (ICPD Programme of Action, Principle 9).

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