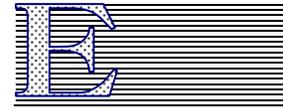




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The 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses in Africa

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1. Introduction

Population and Housing Censuses (PHC) constitute the major source of data on the size, distribution and characteristics of the population, as well as their housing characteristics. Despite limitations pertaining essentially to low frequency and the cost, PHCs have and will continue to play a central role in monitoring development planning and progress towards the MDGs.

At the mid-point of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses, 36 per cent of African countries have already undertaken their PHCs. This percentage is expected to rise to 60 per cent by the end of 2010 and only one country has not committed to undertake a PHC by the end of the current round. This is quite encouraging as the continent is poised to register a commendable level of participation since the majority of African countries achieved their independence. That outcome is a result, *inter alia*, of strong advocacy driven by the African statistical community. Indeed, under the leadership of the three regional institutions namely the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the African Union Commission (AUC) and also some leading countries such as South Africa, a vigorous advocacy for an enhanced participation of African countries during the current round has been developed, notably through the Africa Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD).

At the same time, ECA has developed a number of documents that are expected to help countries to harmonize their methodologies, share their respective experiences, and provide guidance in census taking.

2. African Addendum to the Principles and Recommendations of PHC

In implementing a resolution of the ASSD, ECA has drafted an Addendum to the Global Principles and Recommendations (P&R) of Population and Housing Censuses. This document emphasizes the realities and specificities of African countries by stressing the core topics, definitions and concepts.

African countries identified some topics as pivotal (i.e. “core”) for the region even though they are not regarded as such at the global level. In addition, Africa proposed some topics which are not included in the global P&R, with a recommendation that they should be included, even though non-core in the Africa Region.

The Addendum also reviewed definitions of some concepts to fit them to African countries’ realities.

3. Census planning and enumeration

ECA has also developed a handbook on census planning and enumeration based on African experiences in this domain with a view to gathering pertinent African experiences whether good or bad so that countries will benefit from these lessons.

The document provides key elements of planning in which the institutional aspects take a fundamental place. Moreover, it provides some lessons in terms of training fieldworkers and conducting enumeration. The document highlights the role of publicity during all phases of the process.

With regard to the enumeration, the document presents experiences on how to enumerate special population groups such as homeless persons, refugees, nomadic populations, and so on.

4. Census data processing, analysis and dissemination

The development of the Handbook on African Experiences in Census Data Processing, Analysis and Dissemination is in its final phase. It has been elaborated in close collaboration between Statistics South Africa, the African Centre for Statistics (ACS) and experts from African countries.

It has been noted that many African countries are challenged when it comes to the data processing phase. New technologies have emerged that help countries to shorten delays in releasing results as well as to improve data quality. However without proper information, training and control on the technology, one cannot reap the benefits that are expected (see in Annex 1 evaluation of the data processing for some countries).

A well organized census is one which takes into account data processing issues. Among main concerns is the planning, where the choice of hardware and software determines the whole census process. Currently, scanning technology is spreading within the Africa region. However, some countries have experienced some difficulties.

Some Statistical Offices used to outsource data processing to private companies: among the issues relating from this dimension are the lack of security and confidentiality, and the loss of experience.

5. Census implementation

So far since 2005, the starting year of the current round, 19 countries have already conducted their censuses. Some emerging conflicts have constrained a few countries to postpone their censuses. In 2010, 14 more countries plan to conduct their censuses.

More and more countries entirely fund their censuses or cover the largest part of the census budget. In addition, they more often use new technologies including satellite imagery, scanning technologies and GIS. There has been a noticeable involvement of government authorities, at the highest level, in census enumeration advocacy: this includes speeches from Presidents or Prime Ministers as well as day-off during the whole period of the census enumeration or at least the first day.

In some countries, political and social issues still hamper the implementation of the census; for instance in three countries, the censuses have been postponed from 2009 to 2010.

Other issues are related to the delay in releasing results: while for some countries, the reasons fundamentally have to do with difficulties in data processing, other countries have not yet released their census results due to non-approval by their authorities. On the one hand there is a need to reduce delay between data enumeration and data dissemination but on the other hand there is also a need to have approval to release the census results from the highest authority.

6. Role of regional institutions

The African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC) composed of ECA, AfDB, AUC and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), is working on how to better coordinate its activities within the continent. In this regard, it organized many meetings and workshops in order to harmonize methodologies and concepts and to provide support to countries in different areas of statistics. The ASCC supported the organization of the ASSD in Accra in 2008, Luanda (2009) and in Dakar (2009). These fora constitute the main opportunities for African countries to discuss PHC issues.

On its part, ECA has organized:

- In November 2008, one expert group meeting on census planning and enumeration with the objective of providing inputs and directives to the consultant hired by ECA for the preparation of the Handbook on Census Planning;
- In October 2009, one expert group meeting on census data processing, analysis and dissemination; the objective of that meeting was to review the draft document elaborated by the Statistics South Africa team;
- In November 2009, one workshop on the subject of census planning and enumeration; during that workshop, experts from various countries made a final review of the handbook elaborated by ECA;
- In December 2009, one workshop on the subject of data processing, analysis and dissemination during which experts approved the final version of the handbook;
- In addition, in September 2009, ECA has co-organized (with UNSD) one workshop on the subject of census evaluation and post-enumeration survey.

7. Conclusion

The African participation in the 2010 round of population and housing censuses is encouraging. However, the region must continue to pay more attention to fragile States.

In most cases, countries are still struggling with funds mobilization. Censuses should be incorporated in the PRSP activities so that budget will be covered by countries instead of relying on external support.

All countries recognize the importance of advocacy in census taking. Therefore, involving high authorities will considerably boost the census taking and quality.

Annex 1: Country data processing experiences

No	Country	Census Date	Technology Used	Challenges	
				Data Capture	Data tabulation
1	Ethiopia	2007	OMR	Minor challenges	Minor Challenges
2	Ghana	2000	OCR	Difficult	Difficult
3	Kenya	1999	ICR/OCR	Minor Challenges	Minor Challenges
4	Liberia	2007 and 2008	Manual Data Entry	-	-
5	Malawi	2008	OMR	Minor Challenges	Minor Challenges
6	Mauritius	2000	Manual Data Entry	-	-
7	Nigeria	2006		Minor Challenges	Minor Challenges
8	Seychelles	?	Manual Data Entry	-	-
9	Sierra Leone	2004	Manual Data Entry	-	-
10	South Africa	2007		Minor Challenges	Minor Challenges
11	Sudan	2008	OMR	Minor Challenges	-
12	Swaziland	2007	Manual Data Entry	-	-
13	Tanzania	2002	OMR	Minor Challenges	Minor challenges
14	Uganda	2002	Manual Data Entry	-	-
15	Zambia	2000	OMR	Minor challenges	Minor challenges
16	Zimbabwe	2002	Manual Data Entry	-	-

Annex 2: African PHCs dates

No.	Countries	Date of PHC
1	Algeria	16-30 Apr 2008
2	Angola	(2010 or 2014)
3	Benin	2012
4	Botswana	(Aug 2011)
5	Burkina Faso	9-23 Dec 2006
6	Burundi	16-30 Aug 2008
7	Cameroon	11-30 Nov 2005
8	Cape Verde	2010
9	Central African Rep.	2013
10	Chad	(20 May – 30 June, 2009)
11	Comoros	2013
12	Congo	28-Apr-07
13	Côte d'Ivoire	(Nov 2009)
14	R.D. Congo	2010
15	Djibouti	(12-26 Apr 2009)
16	Egypt	11 Nov -11 Dec 2006
17	Equatorial Guinea	(...)
18	Eritrea	2011
19	Ethiopia	28-May-07
20	Gabon	2013
21	Gambia	2013
22	Ghana	(Mar 2010)
23	Guinea	(Dec 2009)
24	Guinea Bissau	(Apr 2009)
25	Kenya	(24/25 Aug 2009)
26	Lesotho	9-Apr-06
27	Liberia	21-Mar-08
28	Libya Arab Jamahiriya	15 Apr-7 May 2006

No.	Countries	Date of PHC
29	Madagascar	(Oct / Nov 2009)
30	Malawi	8-21 Jun 2008
31	Mali	1-14 Apr 2009
32	Mauritania	(Nov 2010)
33	Mauritius	(Jul 2010) (P) (...) (H)
34	Morocco	(Sep 2014)
35	Mozambique	Feb 2010 (H) Jun 2010 (P)
36	Namibia	2011
37	Niger	2011
38	Nigeria	21-27 Mar 2006
39	Rwanda	2012
40	Sao Tomé and Príncipe	2011
41	Senegal	2010
42	Seychelles	(Apr 2010)
43	Sierra Leone	2014
44	Somalia	(...)
45	South Africa	(Oct 2011)
46	Sudan	22-Apr-08
47	Swaziland	28 Apr-14 May 2007
48	Togo	(April or Nov. 2010)
49	Tunisia	2014
50	Uganda	(Sep 2012)
51	U. R. of Tanzania	(Aug 2012)
52	Zambia	(Aug 2010)
53	Zimbabwe	(Aug 2012)