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THE FORMULATION OF THE AFRICAN PROGRAMME FOR  
THE 1970 CENSUSES OF POPULATION AND HOUSING

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The general objectives of the 1970 World Population and Housing Census Programmes have been stated in the United Nations document Progress Report on the 1970 World Population and Housing Census Programmes (E/CN.3/337). The 1970 World Programme consists of a number of related international, regional and national activities designed to assist countries in the conduct of population and housing censuses in the period 1965-74.

2. An important element of United Nations participation in the Programme has been the preparation of the documents Principles and Recommendations for a Population Census: Draft Recommendations for 1970 Censuses (E/CN.3/330) and Principles and Recommendations for a Housing Census: Draft Recommendations for the 1970 Censuses (E/CN.3/332). These principles and recommendations reflect the experiences of a large number of countries, representing all regions, in the 1960 round of censuses, and are intended to provide a broad framework which can be modified on a regional basis to meet local requirements.

## II. THE FORMULATION OF THE AFRICAN PROGRAMME

3. Progress to date was summarized in the ECA document The 1970 Population and Housing Census Programmes in the African Region (E/CN.14/CAS.4/CPH/10) which also outlines possible future lines of action by which the countries of the African region may develop the regional adaptation of the worldwide programme. The course proposed is parallel to that being followed in Europe, Latin America and Asia and the Far East and includes regional meetings at which detailed consideration may be given to the principles and recommendations for the planning and conduct of population and housing censuses, the topics to be investigated, the definition and specification of these topics, the tabulations to be made and the dissemination of the results. A suggested time table was given in the document E/CN.14/CAS.4/CPH/10, arranged in a way which would fit in with the timing of the worldwide programme.

## III. THE WORKING GROUP ON CENSUSES OF POPULATION AND HOUSING

4. In order to prepare concrete proposals which could be put before the Fourth Conference of African Statisticians, a meeting was convened by the Economic Commission in cooperation with the United Nations Statistical Offices and the Bureau of Technical Assistance Operations. This Working Group on Censuses of Population and Housing met in Addis Ababa from 21 to 29 June 1965 and was attended by participants from 8 member and 2 associate member states, and representatives of ILO and the North African Demographic Training and Research Centre. The Report of the Working Group is presented to the Conference as document E/CN.14/CAS.4/CPH/11.

5. It will be seen from the report that the Working Group covered a very wide field in relations to censuses of population and housing but was not able, in the time at its disposal, to give attention to the question of tabulations to be recommended for the African programme. It is therefore proposed that the Working Group should be convened for a second session (subject to the availability of funds), early in 1966.

## IV. SOME NOTES ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING GROUP

6. General: The Working Group was in broad agreement with the United Nations Principles and Recommendations both for population and housing. It was felt that these were, with some exceptions, applicable in African conditions and could be used as a framework for the collection of data which would meet national needs without sacrificing international comparability.

7. Provisional lists of topics to be investigated in African censuses. The Working Group after lengthy discussions endorsed (a) a Provisional List of Topics for Inclusion in the 1970 Round of African Population Censuses (para. 49 of the Report) and (b) a Provisional List of Topics for Inclusion in Housing Census or Survey in the 1970 Programmes (para. 96 of the Report).

8. The Provisional List of topics for a population census consisted of 3 sections headed: Basic Priority I, Basic Priority II and Priority III. as it was strongly asserted that Priority I and Priority II were of equal status, it is suggested that the Conference might endorse the following minor change in presentation of the Provisional List:

I. BASIC TOPICS

- a. For inclusion in a complete census
- b. For inclusion in sample surveys where inclusion in complete censuses is not considered feasible

II. FURTHER DESIRABLE TOPICS

9. The Provisional List of topics for a housing census or survey consisted of 22 items, the first 17 of which were recommended as a minimum programme for a housing inquiry to be integrated in a population census; the complete list would be suitable for a more intensive survey of African housing to be carried out, in most instances, on a sample basis. The items appearing in the Provisional List were said to be presented in the order of importance assigned to them. However the following points must be taken into consideration:

- a. It was felt that the discussion on housing had not been as satisfactory to the Group as it would have wished, because of lack of continuity of experience at national levels and also because of shortage of time.
- b. The Group did not reach agreement on the definition of a housing unit for application in African inquiries.
- c. The Group recommended that the question of the definition of a housing unit and the specification of the types of housing unit be given fuller discussion at the next session of the Working Group.
- d. The Group also recommended that the question of the priorities of the topics listed in para. 96 be taken up again at the next session.

## V. CONCLUSION

10. The attention of the Conference is drawn to the importance of the suggestions made by the Working Group. The Conference, as the body to which the Working Group reports, may wish to express its views on the general findings of the Group as summarized in the Report, and may wish also to consider the points raised in paras. 8 and 9 above, especially the latter. It is a matter of urgency that the Working Group at its second session have the benefit of the comments of the Conference and the timing is such that this is the only available occasion. These comments could then be incorporated in the text of the draft African Programme for the 1970 censuses and would facilitate the eventual adoption by the Fifth Conference of the final version of the Programme.