

Expert Group Meeting on Evaluation of Population Census Data in Arab Countries

Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco

30 September 2019

Information Note

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Since the quality of statistical data is considered one important indicator to be used in policy making and strategies' formulation, the interest of measuring that quality and framing it has been increased at the international and national statistical levels.

In the area of population censuses, the quality of age-distribution data is of prime importance in population censuses because such data is needed in various demographic estimations such as fertility, migration, diseases and death rates as well as in population projections that provide scenarios on population numbers and economic and social needs such as education, health, employment and housing.

In general, most censuses conducted by countries have errors in age data, where errors come from different sources, including, erroneous responses during fieldwork, misunderstanding questions about age - known as data content error or a defect in the methodology of the question-, errors in data entry and computation. Moreover, in some developing countries, there are respondents who do not know their exact age or the age of family members are not known nor reported by the head of household. The most common age groups are the preferred age groups, which often end in zero or five, or are favored by many for their cultural significance. This pattern is known as age accumulation and can be easily measured. The accumulation of age leads to a distortion of the age structure of the population, which in turn leads to the production of inaccurate population indicators and thus to erroneous conclusions about demographic patterns. The rate of reporting age errors varies considerably between countries as well as between censuses in the country itself. It is therefore important to assess the reliability of age and sex data before use in demographic analysis or population projections as one of the important steps in evaluating population censuses.

In this context, the Statistics Division of ESCWA organized an expert group meeting on the evaluation of census data in Arab countries within the framework of the 2010 round of censuses, at the United Nations House in Beirut, during the period 12-13 June 2013. The meeting concluded with a series of recommendations: 1) developing national frameworks for quality measurement, 2) evaluating census data in Arab countries 3) and preparing a study on age data in population censuses for selected Arab countries (Jordan, UAE, Syrian Arab Republic, Oman, Sudan, Iraq, Palestine, Egypt, Morocco, Yemen)

To complement the efforts made in this regard, the Statistics Division is preparing another study on the evaluation of census data in Arab countries within the framework of the 2020 census round. The

study will cover also some countries that have conducted censuses at the end of the 2010 round of censuses. The study will also include comparisons between more than one census in the same country. The results of this study will be presented as part of an expert meeting organized by the Statistics Division of ESCWA in cooperation with the High Planning Commission of Morocco and the UNFPA Regional Office for the Arab States, on 30 September 2019 in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco.

I- Objectives

The aim of the meeting is to present and discuss studies and papers prepared by experts on evaluating the quality of census data in the Arab countries, especially age and gender data.

II- Participants

The meeting will be attended by staff of national statistical offices, as well as regional and international experts.

III- Main areas of discussion

The meeting includes the following main topics:

- Review the results of the questionnaire sent to countries on evaluating census data;
- Review and discuss ESCWA study on the evaluation of age data for some census data;
- Review country experiences on the quality of age data in censuses for countries using new technology in data collection and entry;
- Conduct the post-census study.

IV- Documents

- A) Country and expert presentations;
- B) Expert papers.

V- Language

The meeting will be in Arabic and English and there will be simultaneous interpretation.

VI- Venue and time of the meeting

The meeting will be held on 30 September 2019 at the Golden Tulip Farah Rabat Hotel, Kingdom of Morocco.

VII- Administrative arrangements

- Participants are required to apply for a visa to the Kingdom of Morocco (for those who need it);
- Participants are requested to stay at the hotel where the venue of the meeting for logistical reasons;
- For further information on logistical and administrative matters, please contact Ms. Zeina Sinno on e-mail: sinnoz@un.org.

VIII- For further information, contact:

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