

Seminar on Population and Housing Census Practices of OIC Member Countries
6-8 March 2013, Ankara, Turkey

Session IV: The Way Forward: Towards the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses

Censuses are continuously evolving in terms of how they are defined and also how they are conducted. Dwindling financial resources and wide spread concern about privacy has forced many countries to implement a census in more innovative ways than ever. What type of challenges is the 2020 round of the population and housing censuses likely to face? Panelists will give their perspectives on the likely future of population and housing censuses.

Moderator: Margaret Mbogoni, UNSD

Speakers/Panelists: IDB, SESRIC, UNESCWA and all volunteer participating countries

Format: The session will take the form of questions to and answers by panelists, with no formal presentations. The moderator will address questions common to all panelists as well as follow-up questions that may be relevant to a panelist's unique national experience. After the rounds of questions and answers, the audience will be invited to pose questions to the panelists.

Questions to be responded:

1. Rising cost of censuses, and growing availability of data from other statistical sources often raise a question regarding the necessity of censuses. Will population and housing censuses continue to exist? Is such a large statistical activity targeting a whole population really necessary especially given the financial constraints faced by countries?
2. Will register-based censuses be a viable option for the traditional census? Is it an applicable mode of data collection for developing countries, where civil registration vital statistics systems remain weak? What is the likely public and political perception of giving up the traditional census to use other alternatives?
3. Are present topics covered by a census suitable to capture the reality of a society? While there is the usefulness of including the same topics so as to observe changes of socio-economic circumstances over a period of time, are there emerging issues that the population and housing censuses should capture in the next census?
4. For future censuses, some developing countries want to explore a multi-mode or multi-channel data collection approach that includes self-enumeration via the Internet and use of digital devices. What are the likely challenges of putting in place a corresponding system to accommodate this? How would security of data that are submitted via the Internet for both the self-enumeration and by use of digital devices be ensured? What would be the challenges of monitoring the census operation when data are submitted through multiple channels?
5. Many countries now have high penetration of cellular telephones. Would you consider use of cell phones for census data collection, similar to use of the Internet through personal computers? Why (for yes and no)? What do you see as the challenges for using this approach?
6. What are possible areas of cooperation in census taking among OIC Member Countries? How can such cooperation be strengthened? Has your country been involved in any south-to-south cooperation for census activities? If so, in what capacity? What do you see as the benefits and challenges for south-to-south cooperation in census activities?
7. What do you see as the role of SESRIC and IDB (permanent bureau members of OIC-StatCom) and of the United Nations (UNSD, UNESCWA, UNFPA) in the facilitation of capacity building for census activities?