

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

**ECLAC SUBREGIONAL HEADQUARTERS
FOR THE CARIBBEAN**



Report of the expert group meeting on planning for the 2020 round of censuses in the Caribbean



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Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

Expert group meeting on planning for the 2020 round
of censuses in the Caribbean
1 December 2017
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

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**REPORT OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING
ON PLANNING FOR THE 2020 ROUND OF CENSUSES
IN THE CARIBBEAN**

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This document was prepared by Lydia Rosa Gény, Associate Social Affairs Officer, under the supervision of Abdullahi Abdulkadri, Coordinator, Statistics and Social Development Unit, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean. Editorial assistance was provided by Leeanna Joy Seelochan, Research Assistant in the Statistics and Social Development Unit, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean.

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A. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The next round of censuses in the Caribbean presents an opportunity for generating relevant data for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators. Countries in the subregion should use this occasion to strengthen their statistical systems while implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs.
2. The assessment of population and housing censuses as a data source for the SDG indicators should not be limited to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) draft list of core indicators.
3. Considering the impact of hurricanes on the Caribbean during the 2017 session, a new post-hurricane assessment should be conducted in the affected countries in relation to their plans for conducting the census and to identify their needs for technical assistance.
4. Many countries are planning to make changes to their methodology for updating cartographic information, and for disseminating census data. However, technical assistance and funding are needed to strengthen human and technical capacities, including in the procurement of new technologies and devices in order to effectively implement those changes.
5. ECLAC should continue to provide REDATAM training in the subregion, especially in the creation of web portals in order to facilitate broader access to data by the general public. With the support of other partners, a uniform mechanism for reporting census results should be adopted in the subregion.

B. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. Place and date

6. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) subregional headquarters for the Caribbean convened an expert group meeting to discuss the study entitled “Planning for the 2020 round of population censuses in the Caribbean”. The expert group meeting took place on 1 December 2017 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

2. Attendance

7. The meeting was attended by Directors, Chief Statisticians and senior staff of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in the Caribbean. The following ECLAC Member States were represented: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Two associate members of ECLAC, Aruba and British Virgin Islands, were also represented. Regional organizations represented at the meeting included the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).

3. Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Presentation of the paper “Planning for the 2020 Round of population censuses in the Caribbean”
3. Discussions
4. Closing remarks

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Opening of meeting

8. The Coordinator of the Statistics and Social Development Unit of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean welcomed all participants to the expert group meeting. He conveyed the apologies of the Director of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean for not being able to attend the event as she was out of the country on official mission. The Unit Coordinator thanked the ECLAC consultant for assisting in the preparation of the study. He expressed his expectation that the meeting would provide an opportunity to exchange views on the relevance of the next round of censuses in the subregion to data collection for the SDGs indicators, as well as on the role of NSOs in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs.

9. He reminded participants that ECLAC, in implementing the biennial programme of work of the Statistical Conference of the Americas in the area of capacity building in preparation of the 2020 census round, conducted a technical needs assessment survey (TNAS) of NSOs in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2016. The survey provided a first indication of the changes being contemplated by countries to the census questionnaire and the anticipated technical assistance needs. The survey recorded a 64 per cent response rate among Caribbean countries with only 12 of 20 countries covered by the survey completing and returning the questionnaire. Given this low response rate, a follow-up survey of NSOs in the Caribbean was conducted in August 2017. The second survey resulted in a 95.4 per cent response rate in which 21 out of 22 countries in the Caribbean¹ provided responses. The ECLAC study, therefore, analyzed the responses received and provided some recommendations. He concluded that this meeting would help ECLAC and other stakeholders to identify the specific needs of NSOs in order to provide tailored technical assistance in this process of states' implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs.

2. Presentation of the paper “Planning for the 2020 round of censuses in the Caribbean”

10. The ECLAC consultant gave a summary of the background and the main findings of the draft ECLAC study on “Planning for the 2020 round of censuses in the Caribbean”. She mentioned that the majority of countries are expected to conduct the census between 2020 and 2022. Ten out of 21 countries have already undertaken activities in preparation for the next census, which are in the initial planning stages. This entailed preliminary meetings with stakeholders, cartographic updating, drafting questions, budgeting, scheduling, and the inauguration of advisory committee members; 4 out of these 10 countries have secured partial funding from their national budget allocation for basic resources, such as software and equipment, in the execution of the census; and 3 countries indicated their need for technical assistance in planning, communication, and managing of a census from planning to dissemination phases. She also highlighted that due to the impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in the subregion, a new post-hurricane assessment might be required in order to review the situation of the affected countries in relation to their plans for conducting the census and to identify their needs for technical assistance.

11. In terms of cartographic updates, the ECLAC consultant indicated that 10² out of the 21 countries reported that they do not use urban-rural classification due to their geographical size and therefore will

¹ Participating countries were: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sint Maarten, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands.

² Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Grenada, Montserrat, and Sint Maarten.

present census results at the country level. However, 11 countries will use urban-rural classification³. Some countries plan to make changes to the methodology for updating cartographic information, but the majority foresees difficulties in this process of cartographic updates, including updating digital information due to limited financial, technical, and human resources capacities. Therefore, the majority of the countries plan to use new technologies, including Global Positioning System (GPS), aerial photographs, drone technology, and Geographic Information System (GIS) software. In this context, technical assistance will be needed for updating maps, for training in GIS software used for mapping and analysis, including geo-coding and geo-referencing, and for developing a strategy to acquire cartographic data and software at the country or subregion level. In addition, some countries plan to change the duration of data collection, by using Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI), Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI), Computer Assisted Self-Interview (CASI), and Computer Assisted Web Interview (CAWI) for collecting data.

12. Regarding the census questionnaire, the ECLAC consultant explained that the majority of countries are yet to develop their questionnaire, but many are in collaboration with CARICOM to finalize a regional questionnaire to be adapted at the national level. Some countries are planning to introduce changes to the dwelling sections, the household sections, to the population characteristics, including persons with disabilities, as well as to migration and usual residence. The majority of countries are still in discussions on education and economic activity, but seven are already planning to introduce changes. Other countries are planning to make changes regarding access to ICTs and digital literacy, including use of mobile phone, tablets, computer and internet; and almost all countries are in discussions concerning new topics to meet emerging national demand, such as pension and health coverage, remittances, health responsibilities for the care of children, sick or older persons, among others. The majority of the countries ranked the census questionnaire as a high priority area for technical assistance, as well as for making the linkages to the relevant indicators for analysis, including United Nations principles and recommendations for the 2020 census rounds. The need to train staff from the conceptualisation of the questionnaire to linking the questionnaire to the relevant indicators for analysis was also identified as a critical area.

13. Concerning staff training plans for the census, the study revealed that countries are either considering changes in the census staff training plan or extending the period for census trainer training. The majority of countries are planning to introduce new technologies as learning tools, others are considering monitoring the training plan and quality control, and/or documenting the entire process including quality control. The need for technical assistance was also identified in order to strengthen staff capacity in all phases of the census as well as their use of new technologies.

14. In terms of coverage of the evaluation plans, the ECLAC consultant highlighted that ten countries are planning to introduce changes in quality control and coverage evaluation and nine in the methodology of assessing census coverage. The large majority of countries ranked the quality and coverage control as high or medium priority areas, as well as the assessment of coverage as a priority concern for technical assistance.

15. In relation to data capture, the study showed that almost all countries plan to use mobile device for data collection and this was ranked as a high priority area for technical assistance. Similarly important is data processing, where the majority of countries reported changes in the methodology for processing

³ Belize, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands.

data that consists of detecting inconsistencies in the capture process and of automatization of data validation, editing and imputation. Other countries are considering changes in the process of encoding open questions, in the consistency check and cleaning of the database. For these reasons, countries have also rated data processing a high priority area for technical assistance.

16. Regarding data analysis and dissemination, despite the fact that all countries have regulations or policies regarding distribution of census microdata, several countries proposed to make changes to the plan for tabulating census results, and others to the reporting of census results. Many countries are using or contemplating the use of an online processing method. Technical assistance will be needed in this area, in particular for demographic analysis and population projection.

17. The following priority areas for technical assistance for the next round of censuses are identified in the ECLAC study:

- Use of technologies for data capture (CATI, CAPI, CASI, CAWI)
- Data processing
- Quality and coverage control
- Funding
- Dissemination of information
- Analysis of information
- Staff training
- Assessment of coverage
- Pilot census
- Methodological design
- Census questionnaire

18. The ECLAC consultant highlighted both the opportunities and limitations of using the census for generating relevant data for the SDG indicators. Since censuses provide baselines for projecting the size and composition of the population, including older persons, persons with disabilities and migrants, it could complement other sources of data derived from surveys, vital registration systems, surveillance systems, and administrative data. Based on the CARICOM draft core list of 109 SDG indicators for the Caribbean, she concluded that the census data could be useful in computing 33 of these indicators and could enable Caribbean countries to monitor progress on 12 out of the 17 SDGs.

3. Discussion

Limitation of using the census for SDG implementation

19. The representative of Suriname highlighted that not all SDGs can be measured through the census even if the questions are included in the survey. Therefore, meeting participants agreed that all SDG indicators be assessed to determine if they can be effectively measured through the census. Both the ECLAC Unit Coordinator and the consultant clarified that this assessment was already done in the study based on the draft list of core indicators prepared by Caribbean Community (CARICOM). However, the representative of Saint Lucia expressed his concerns regarding the use of the CARICOM draft list of core indicators as a baseline for the study since the draft list had not been finalized by CARICOM. The representative of the OECS also agreed that countries should not limit themselves to the CARICOM draft list of core indicators and indicated that her organization is in the process of determining an Action Plan for progress towards the SDGs to further support Member States in their monitoring and reporting on the

SDGs. Based on the discussions, ECLAC will review the global SDG indicators in the updated version of the study, with a view to include additional relevant indicators.

Mapping multidimensional poverty

20. The representative of Saint Lucia noted that the study did not mention the issue of multidimensional poverty and informed that the census could be a powerful source for allowing countries in the subregion to map multidimensional poverty. Despite the fact that multidimensional poverty was not included on the CARICOM draft list of core indicators, the ECLAC Unit Coordinator suggested that countries could broaden the scope of any national list and some indicators could be computed from different sections of the census to produce a composite index, for instance, for mapping multidimensional poverty.

Mapping crime incidence

21. SDG 16 refers to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. In this regard, the representative of Saint Lucia mentioned that it is important to collect not only reported crime in the census, but also the incidence of crime. Similarly, despite the fact that reported crime is part of the CARICOM draft list of core indicators, the representative of Aruba highlighted that measuring crime is a sensitive issue and may not be included in the census of her country. More information is therefore needed regarding the inclusion of this indicator as a core indicator on the draft list of core indicators prepared by CARICOM in order to know how it is going to be measured due to the sensitivity of the topic.

Food security

22. SDG 2 aims at ending hunger, achieving food security and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture. According to the representative of Saint Lucia, the census may not be the best source of data for SDG indicator 2.1.2 regarding food insecurity. This opinion was also shared by other participants, including Aruba. However, the ECLAC consultant clarified that this indicator is included on the CARICOM draft list of core SDG indicators for the subregion, as such each country would be expected to provide data on the indicator.

Use of ICT

23. The representative of the CDB stressed the importance of using GIS mapping with census data in order to capture information on business establishment and update business registers. This suggestion was endorsed by the representative of Saint Lucia as his country already includes a question on businesses. There are some economic sectors on which data are more difficult to obtain and much more needs to be done regarding the agricultural sector. It was reported that Barbados had included questions on the agricultural sector on their last census but the limited number of responses received to these questions impeded them in conducting an analysis on the situation of this sector.

24. The representative of the CDB suggested that the 2020 round of censuses could be an opportunity to merge data from previous censuses to generate a visual representation of historical population changes and identify demographic trends in each country. Suriname endorsed this suggestion but indicated the challenges that they face due to the lack of trained personnel. The meeting was informed that Mexico is using free GIS software online and this could be used for training persons in the Caribbean. The representative of Grenada reported that they are also using GIS in their census, as well as CAPI for data collection for the labour force survey and population and housing census. The representative of Saint Lucia highlighted that in addition to integrating GIS into the census, there is a need to get accurate GPS location of each dwelling unit and precise geo-reference maps. To illustrate, the presentative from Aruba indicated that they will use a programme called “Serving to Go” in order to capture each location

by GPS. However, she alluded to obstacles in procuring some 1500 devices that will be needed to conduct the census.

Dissemination of census information

25. The representative of the CDB enquired about the existence of any uniform reporting mechanism, such as REDATAM, in the subregion for reporting census results. According to the OECS, no uniform approach exists but this could be discussed at the subregional level as many countries have not disseminated their census results. The representative of Saint Lucia emphasized that countries have their own national reports and suggested the creation of a standardised template, as well as the conduct of REDATAM training throughout the subregion. In this regard, the ECLAC Population Affairs Officer informed that ECLAC promotes REDATAM and while there was no standardized practice or template, several training sessions in the subregion have been conducted, including in Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago. The challenge was to get REDATAM implemented in countries in a timely manner. Aruba has a functioning REDATAM website as well as the Cayman Islands, and Trinidad and Tobago is expected to put in place one shortly. Antigua and Barbuda reported that they received the REDATAM training and are looking forward to establishing their website with additional technical support. ECLAC had intended to do more work in REDATAM with these countries in order to have more country websites online and functioning. The representative of Saint Lucia reiterated the importance of having more than one regional workshop on REDATAM in the Caribbean annually.

26. The representative of Trinidad and Tobago noted that one of the problems with census dissemination is the way their census unit is structured. In Trinidad and Tobago, the Census Unit is a specialised project unit that lasts about three years at a time during every census. At the end of the census, the unit would work for about a year processing the data. By the time the data are ready to be disseminated, the unit would have already been dissolved. Based on their experience, one of their focuses for the 2021 census will be the dissemination of data, with thematic and visual maps that will be more accessible to the larger public. Similarly, Aruba will pay particular attention to the dissemination of data and data accessibility.

4. Closing remarks

27. The ECLAC consultant highlighted the importance of information sharing on best practices and challenges at the preparatory stage of the next round of censuses. ECLAC, CARICOM, CDB, OECS, and other partners could support countries with standardized templates and dissemination of the census data in order to make them more accessible to the larger public. There is also the need to find a cost effective strategy to identify funds for procuring new technologies, as well as for training staff.

28. The Unit Coordinator of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean was pleased to see the interests in REDATAM training in the subregion and reiterated that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a good platform for improving the statistical systems in the subregion and countries should take advantage of this Agenda to build their NSOs. He indicated the interest of ECLAC in collaborating with other regional organizations and stakeholders in this process and gave a vote of thanks, expressing appreciation to the participants for their substantive contributions to the expert group meeting and for their recommendations.

Annex I**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

Rohan Anthony, Ministry of Finance and Economy, Statistics Division, Antigua and Barbuda.
E-mail: rohan.anthony@ab.gov.ag

Gale Archibald, Head, Statistical Services Unit, Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission. E-mail: gale.archibald@oecs.int

Aubrey Victor Browne, Director (Ag.), Barbados Statistical Service. E-mail: director@barstats.gov.bb

Tiemonne Charles, Deputy Director (Ag.), Central Statistical Office, Grenada.
E-mail: tiemonne@gmail.com

Janet Geoghagen-Martin, Director, Censuses, Demographic and Social Statistics Division, Jamaica.
E-mail: sesu@statinja.gov.jm

Eartha Groenfelt, Manager Census office / Deputy Director of Scientific Research and Planning, General Bureau of Statistics, Suriname. E-mail: egroenfelt@gmail.com

Desiree Helder, Head of the Department of Social Demographic Statistics, Central Bureau of Statistics, Aruba. E-mail: dhelder@cbs.aw

Caron London, Statistician II, Central Statistical Office. E-mail: caronlondon@yahoo.com

Raymond Phillips, Director, Central Statistics Office, Government of the British Virgin Islands.
E-mail: RPhillips@gov.vg

Dindial Ramrattan, Statistician, Caribbean Development Bank, Barbados. E-mail: ramratd@caribank.org

Simone Rawlins, Senior Statistician, Central Statistical Office. E-mail: sjraw63@yahoo.com

Edwin St. Catherine, Director of Statistics, Finance Administration Center, Saint Lucia.
E-mail: edwin.stcatherine@govt.lc

Todne Woods, Senior Statistician (Ag.), Barbados Statistical Service. E-mail: twoods@barstats.gov.bb

ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean

Abdulkadri Abdullahi, Coordinator, Statistics and Social Development Unit. E-mail: abdulkadri.abdullahi@eclac.org

Francis Jones, Population Affairs Officer, Statistics and Social Development Unit. E-mail: francis.jones@eclac.org

Candice Gonzales, Research Assistant, Statistics and Social Development Unit. E-mail: candice.gonzales@eclac.org

Lydia Rosa Gény, Associate Social Affairs Officer, Statistics and Social Development Unit. E-mail: Lydia.RosaGény@eclac.org

Colleen Skeete, Team Assistant, Statistics and Social Development Unit. E-mail: colleen.skeete@eclac.org

Adanna Cudjoe, Research Assistant, Statistics and Social Development Unit. E-mail: adanna.cudjoe@eclac.org

Leeanna Joy Seelochan, Research Assistant, Statistics and Social Development Unit. E-mail: leeanna.seelochan@eclac.org

Annex II

PROGRAMME

- 9.00am – 9.30 a.m. On-site registration/Online registration
- 9.30am – 9.45 a.m. **Opening of the meeting**

Abdullahi Abdulkadri, Coordinator
Statistics and Social Development Unit
ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean
- 9.45am – 10.30 a.m. **Presentation of the paper ‘Planning for the 2020 round of censuses in the Caribbean’**

Samantha John-Aloye, Consultant
- 10.30 am – 11.45 a.m. **Discussion**

Participants will be invited to discuss the findings of the paper, including providing recommendations on the implementation of the 2020 round of censuses in the Caribbean.
- 11:45 am – 12.00 p.m. **Conclusions**

Abdullahi Abdulkadri, Coordinator
Statistics and Social Development Unit
ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean

Annex III

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Document symbol

Document title

Programme

Draft paper on 'Planning for the 2020 Round of population censuses in the Caribbean'



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Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL)
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