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Eighth meeting of the Executive Committee of the  
Statistical Conference of the Americas of the  
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**ACTIVITIES REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON CENSUSES \***

\* This report was prepared by Chile, the coordinator of the working group on censuses.

2008-564

## A. BACKGROUND

The working group on censuses has continued with its activities in accordance with the terms of the Strategic Plan 2005-2015 of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). This report covers the activities which have already taken place and those planned for 2008.

During this period, the National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Chile and the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC have worked together very closely, with most activities being planned and agreed jointly. Activities conducted in the first half of 2008 were the setting up of focal points and the distribution of the questionnaire produced by CELADE - Population Division of ECLAC to determine the countries' main needs in preparing for the 2010 round of censuses.

The work of the group followed the strategic goals defined for the period 2007-2009, which are:

- To implement the second revision of Principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses in keeping with the realities of each of the countries of the region.<sup>1</sup>
- To make headway with the harmonization of census information in thematic areas, with operational procedures and with dissemination for the 2010 round of censuses.
- To promote further training for specialists in census activities.
- To develop horizontal cooperation on the use of new technologies for census-taking.
- To include methods for preparing and maintaining housing directories in human resources training.

## B. ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED PURSUANT TO THE STRATEGIC GOALS

The present report covers the activities of the working group on censuses between October 2007 and October 2008.

### 1. Strategic goal 2

As part of the programmed activities under the project for dissemination and evaluation of harmonized census statistics for social programmes for sustainable development in MERCOSUR, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador and Mexico, funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), a joint pilot test on migration was conducted in November 2007, with the participation of Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, "Review and update of the principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses", *Population and Housing Censuses. Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/2007/3)*, Statistical Commission, 8 December 2006.

Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay. Organized by the Brazilian Geographical and Statistical Institute (IBGE), the workshop focused on formulating recommendations on basic and optional themes. Emphasis was placed on the importance of harmonizing the concept of residence and the way of calculating total population. Also discussed were the concepts recommended for the 2010 round of censuses in respect of residence or housing, the family and international or internal migration. The representative of Chile emphasized the need for gender mainstreaming and the challenges represented in the long term by the mainstreaming of the ethnic perspective.

In June-July 2008, Uruguay conducted the first joint pilot test on disability and "usual resident" status. The taking of the survey began in Montevideo on Monday 16 June 2008 and lasted six weeks. The sample comprised 800 households, 550 in the capital and 250 in the city of Salto.

From 2 to 4 June 2008, observers were present from the statistical institutes of Chile and the MERCOSUR countries (attendance was limited for budgetary reasons). On the first two days, the observers participated in field work, assessing various methodological, logistical, operational and technological aspects. The results of this exchange activity will be a valuable input for future work in the areas of planning, human-resources selection and training, and technology use.

Since census-taking in the 2010 round will involve the use of Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), it was decided that the same should be done for the entire data package of this pilot test. This provided an opportunity to conduct simultaneous pilot tests of the performance of the PDAs and of the remote transfer of completed questionnaires to the central server of the National Statistical Institute using various communication media. It was also decided that a number of remote media such as the Internet, and mobile data packet services.

From 17 April to 2 May 2008, some of the members of the working group on censuses took part in an online opinion poll on the desirability and consequences of modifying census criteria to differentiate urban and rural areas for purposes of analysis and policy design. This activity was organized by ECLAC, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France and the Latin American Centre for Rural Development (RIMISP).

The discussions focused on three themes designed to clarify the definition of rural issues: differentiation criteria, trends underlying the need for conceptual changes, and their measurement for purposes of policy design and analysis.

As for harmonizing methodology for the treatment of ethnic groups, as with indigenous and Afro-American peoples, the countries expressed interest in taking part in a joint pilot test for the inclusion of the ethnic perspective in censuses. Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay are planning to conduct the pilot test with indigenous peoples in the week of 3-7 November 2008, with funding from IDB in the framework of the Regional Public Goods Program. As with earlier experiments on migration and disability, it is planned that field work will be conducted in areas with shared frontiers. It was also agreed that a seminar should be held on ethnic mainstreaming in population censuses, to be held in Santiago, Chile, in November 2008, organized by CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the working group on censuses of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, with the cooperation of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) of Mexico presented a proposal to set up an international standards portal to facilitate harmonization of the production of statistical information in Latin America and the Caribbean. The project has been submitted to IDB with support from Brazil and Chile.

## 2. Strategic goal 3

In December 2007, INEGI of Mexico organized a seminar on synergies among census-takers, an activity provided for in the work plan of the working group on censuses of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and conducted with financial support from the United Nations Statistics Division and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The National Institute of Health (NIH) of the United States has renewed its funding of the project on the use in Latin America of the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS-LA). With that support, a workshop on census microdata was held from 3 to 5 June 2008 in Panama City, attended by the countries represented on the working group on censuses.

On 14-15 July 2008, an international seminar entitled "Census technology: towards optimized technology for statistical data collection and processing" was held in Washington, D.C., with financial support from IDB.<sup>2</sup>

From 21 to 30 July 2008, the National Statistical Office of the Dominican Republic organized a workshop to train staff from a number of statistical institutes in the hemisphere in the use of the Census and Survey Processing System (CSPro). Census and survey data can be captured, corrected and tabulated on microcomputers using that software. The training took place in coordination with UNFPA and with support from ECLAC.<sup>3</sup>

A course in remote sensing as applied to territorial observation and information was held in Madrid from 30 June to 25 July 2008, supported and organized by the Knowledge Transfer Network and the Spanish International Cooperation Agency for Development (AECID). A number of the countries of the region were represented, including Chile.

A course entitled "Census Summit: GIS [Geographic Information Systems] for Census and Statistical Agencies", organized for statistical and census agencies by the software company Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), was held in San Diego, California (United States), from 1 to 8 August 2008. The participants, who included some from Chile, were instructed in the use of the company's software products.

From 4 to 13 August 2008, UNFPA and the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) of Colombia held a training workshop entitled "Processing of census data" for the countries of South America.<sup>4</sup> This was be in the framework of activities preparatory to the 2010 round of censuses, and was coordinated with the agenda adopted for this purpose by the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC. The participants were 18 specialists from eight countries' national statistical

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<sup>2</sup> See the seminar programme [online] at <http://www.iadb.org/res/events/semagenda/smengagenda194.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> "ONE y UNFPA capacitan personal de INEs latinoamericanas" [online] [http://www.one.gob.do/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=173](http://www.one.gob.do/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=173).

<sup>4</sup> See [online] <http://colombia.unfpa.org/procesamientoendatoscensales.htm>.

institutes, including that of Colombia, and experts involved in activities in their countries directly relating to population and housing censuses.

### **3. Strategic goal 4**

Following up the commitments entered into at the international seminar "Census technology: towards optimized technology for statistical data collection and processing" held on 14-15 July 2008 at IDB headquarters in Washington, D.C., Rogelio Fernández, the former Director of the Technical Support Division of UNFPA, produced a draft Memorandum of Understanding, with a series of proposed annexes, to facilitate the sharing or loan of technology between countries, which would in turn improve the viability of horizontal cooperation.

The purpose of the proposal is to create a formal basis for transferring equipment —PDAs, for example— from country to country in the framework of the UNFPA cooperation programme with each country. Such transfers would benefit from privileges and immunities which would facilitate customs formalities, as well as the formal mediation of UNFPA in each country.

The related documents have been submitted to the countries for their comments.

## **C. PLANNED ACTIVITIES**

The proposed ECLAC/UNFPA Regional Programme on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008-2011, aims to strengthen the region's capacity to collect and organize the data which are necessary and sufficient to reflect its sociodemographic characteristics as well as its subregional, national and subnational specificities, and to promote technically sound analysis which is oriented towards policies, dissemination and promotion. In the specific case of the censuses of the 2010 round, three workshops have been planned for the fourth quarter of 2008 on emerging issues and another in 2009 on data processing and census database creation. In the context of the Regional Programme, support will be provided for the development and dissemination of the REDATAM (retrieval of data for small areas by microcomputer) software, specifically in the fields of programming and translation of manuals into other languages (English, French and Portuguese). The workshops planned for 2008 are:

A seminar on the 2010 round of censuses and the mainstreaming of the ethnic perspective, organized jointly by CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC and the working group on censuses of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNIFEM and PAHO and sponsored by other international bodies, to be held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile, from 19 to 21 November 2008. Its overall objective will be to contribute to ethnic mainstreaming in the censuses of the 2010 round through participatory cooperation with indigenous and Afrodescendent population groups. The specific goals will be: (i) to update the situations of the countries of the region in relation to the inclusion of ethnic-group identification in population and housing censuses, from conceptual aspects to data dissemination and analysis; (ii) to strengthen intercultural participation and dialogue in the census process, taking account of the various stakeholders, particularly national statistical offices, government racial-equality bodies and indigenous and Afrodescendent organizations; (iii) to build consensus around conceptual and operational aspects of ethnic identification criteria, as well as other dimensions and categories dealt with by the census, in coordination with other data sources; (iv) to promote a regional plan of work for the development of technical and methodological capacities, making it possible to

generate and analyse statistical data which are relevant and important for indigenous and Afrodescendent peoples and other ethnic groups; and (v) to promote institutionalization of ethnic issues in national statistical systems, with participation by indigenous and Afrodescendent peoples, learning from existing experiences within or outside the region, with emphasis on resource provision and management.

A regional workshop entitled “Census mapping in Latin America for the 2010 round”, organized jointly by CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC, the working group on censuses of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, the United Nations Statistics Division and UNFPA, to be held in Santiago, Chile, from 24 to 27 November 2008. The overall objective will be to exchange and share the experiences, methodologies, procedures, needs and difficulties of the countries in the process of cartographical updating in order to make recommendations for the upcoming 2010 round of censuses. The specific goals will be: (i) to analyse national experiences and the innovations involved in cartographical updating for the 2010 round of censuses in both urban and rural areas of each country; (ii) to discuss, on the basis of the results of the survey conducted by CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC, the countries' difficulties and concerns regarding the processing and use of new technologies in geographical updating; (iii) to analyse the advantages and disadvantages of new technologies such as GPS, SIG and Google Earth, and the use of satellite imagery at the various stages of cartographical updating, of the subsequent maintenance and management of census cartography, the listing of new areas and sample selection, and (iv) to study the potential of these and other Internet-related technologies to carry out post-census data processing and analysis and exploit spatial analysis and diffusion tools.

A seminar entitled “The 2010 round of censuses, internal and international migration and other forms of spatial mobility”, organized jointly by CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC and the working group on censuses of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, the United Nations Population Division and UNFPA, to be held from 10 to 12 December 2008 at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile. The general objective will be to determine the region's experience in measuring internal and international migration and other forms of spatial mobility, using recent census data, and to make recommendations for the next census round. The specific objectives will be: (i) to update the situation regarding measurement of internal and international migration and other forms of spatial mobility; (ii) to review the implications of the definitions of “usual resident” used in censuses, in the measurement of internal and international migration and of mobility; (iii) to review United Nations recommendations and their modifications; (iv) to analyse and disseminate the work of specific groups such as the working group on migration and trends in remittances; and (v) to establish sets of technical recommendations relating to conceptual and operational aspects of the measurement and analysis of migration and mobility.

An Intensive Regional Course on Demographic Analysis for Development, which is planned for the second quarter of 2009. CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC is approaching IDB to obtain the necessary funding.

The FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean organized a round-table discussion on agricultural censuses, held in Santiago, Chile, from 22 to 26 September 2008.

From 29 September to 1 October 2008, Aguascalientes, México, was the venue for the ninth International Meeting on Gender Statistics for Public Policies, during which the 2010 census round was discussed. The meeting was organized by the Working Group on Gender Statistics of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, UNIFEM and INEGI of Mexico.