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REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUP ON CENSUSES *

* This report was prepared by the National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Chile.

1. Background

The Working Group on Censuses defines its activities in accordance with the Strategic Plan 2005-2015 of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC. At the fourth meeting of the Conference, the working group reported on the activities carried out between September 2006 and July 2007. This report relates to the activities conducted between July and October 2007.

Work has continued on the three strategic goals and the specific goals defined at the seminar on a harmonized vision of the 2010 round of censuses, held in June 2007 in Santiago, Chile, in preparation for the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas. In addition, steps have been taken to obtain funding for the activities relating to the two new objectives agreed at the fourth meeting of the Conference

Strategic goals:

- (i) To implement the second revision of Principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses¹ in keeping with the realities peculiar to each of the countries of the region.
- (ii) To make headway with the harmonization of census information in thematic areas, with operational procedures and with dissemination for the 2010 round of censuses.
- (iii) To promote further training for specialists in census activities.

At the fourth meeting of the Conference, two new goals were incorporated into the work plan:

- (iv) To develop horizontal cooperation on the use of new technologies for census-taking.
- (v) To include in human resources training methods for preparing and maintaining housing directories.

In this connection, “the representative of Brazil supported the proposed harmonization strategy prepared by the working group on censuses and presented by the Argentine delegation, and said that cooperation between the region’s statistical institutes should be encouraged, technical training should be promoted in order to harmonize statistical concepts, and financial resources should be obtained for methodological and technological harmonization efforts. To that end, he urged international bodies to provide technical and financial support. Experts from different countries should be encouraged to take part in any pilot tests conducted at the national level”.² This proposal for technological and methodological cooperation was welcomed by Colombia, Mexico and the United States.

¹ E/CN.3/2007/3.

² Report of the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.2795), Santiago, Chile, October 2007.

2. Description of the activities conducted³

- (a) At the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, Chile presented the programme of work of the Working Group on Censuses.
- (b) The Working Group on Censuses pursued 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. The first three strategic goals of this project are being funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).
 - (i) In connection with the goal for harmonization of census information, in August 2007, Argentina invited countries to participate in the joint pilot test on international migration in order to try out and harmonize census blocks or certain questions relating to international immigration and emigration. The joint pilot test on international migration will be carried out at the end of November by three offices working work in close coordination: the Department of Statistics, Surveys and Censuses (DGEEC) of Paraguay, the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC) of Argentina and the Brazilian Geographical and Statistical Institute (IBGE). To date, the common questionnaire and sample design have been drawn up, while the cartographic material and training manuals are being prepared.
 - (ii) Representatives of the member countries of the Working Group on Censuses participated in the Workshop on preparatory activities, analysis and exchange of experiences for the successful implementation of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses in Latin America and the Caribbean. The workshop was convened in Panama City from 17 to 21 September 2007 under the auspices of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to share information on the implementation of the 2000 round of population and housing censuses and promote collaboration among countries and international organizations with a view to the efficient preparation of the 2010 round of censuses.

All the representatives of the member countries of the Working Group on Censuses participating in this workshop met and agreed to present a project to IDB for analysing the differences between national statistics and international standards, especially those of the United Nations.
- (c) Progress with the 2010 round of censuses, by country
 - (i) Colombia and Peru have already conducted their censuses for the 2010 round. The National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) of Colombia has made methodological and technological advances in the General Census of 2005. Currently this Department is carrying out a series of studies on the basis of the census results.⁴ All the census processes are currently being evaluated, from the planning and design stage to the

³ Based on the information received directly from national statistical agencies in the Latin American countries.

⁴ The relevant documents available on Colombia are as follows:: Proceso de conciliación censal 1985-2005; Calidad de los datos del censo de 2005; Estimación de la fecundidad 1985-2005; Estimación de la mortalidad 1985-2005; Estimación de la migración 1973-2005; Proyecciones nacionales y departamentales de población 2006-2020; Tablas abreviadas de mortalidad nacionales y departamentales 1985-2020.

final dissemination of the census results. The National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI) of Perú conducted its census in October 2007.

- (ii) Some countries reported that they were currently in the process of planning their population and housing census for the 2010 round: Chile has drawn up the census programme and has appointed a working group to execute it in 2012; in Costa Rica, the census project has been presented to the Office of the President of the Republic and has been incorporated into the National Development Plan 2006-2010; the Costa Rican census will be conducted in 2010; Cuba has decided to carry out its census in 2012; in Panamá, the decree-law governing the execution of the census of the 2010 round has been drafted and will be submitted for approval by the President of the Republic; currently, the update of the map database is being carried out and is scheduled for completion in December 2009; Paraguay has started the joint pilot test on international migration and has reviewed and evaluated the applicability of the Principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses; the census is scheduled to be held in 2012. Lastly, in Uruguay, a census planning commission, set up to prepare for the 2010 census exercise, will assess whether it will be feasible to combine the population, household and housing census with the economic and agricultural censuses (the agricultural census falls under the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries).
 - (iii) The Governing Body of the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC) authorized the implementation of a pilot study for the use of personal digital assistants (PDAs) in compiling data for the household survey. This initiative was launched in coordination with the Central American Population Programme, a research and training arm of the University of Costa Rica. The preliminary results of this test are very positive, and further studies are being carried out to decide on details relating to the software and hardware. Panama, for its part, has equipped its mapping office with more modern technology and has increased its staff.
- (d) Bilateral cooperation
- (i) Colombia's experience with its 2005 census has been shared with interested countries, namely, Argentina, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Peru. Thus three staff members from the Department of Statistics, Surveys and Censuses (DGEEC) of Paraguay attended a training course at DANE in Bogota, Colombia, from 27 to 31 August 2007. This course was designed to provide information on the technological and methodological innovations applied in Colombia's 2005 census operation with a view to the formulation of a technical proposal for the conduct of the forthcoming census in Paraguay. Colombia will provide horizontal technical cooperation for the use of PDA devices in the joint pilot test on international migration.
 - (ii) Representatives of Chile, Paraguay and other countries in the region observed the exercise conducted by IBGE in Rio de Janeiro, from 10 to 13 July 2007, in order to see how it worked, especially in terms of the implementation of technological innovations in data collection.
 - (iii) The management of INEC of Costa Rica met with the President of the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) of Mexico to promote a subregional project (which would include Mexico, Central America and Panama) to facilitate the technological

overhaul of the national statistical offices and statistical research in general and, especially the 2010 round of population and housing censuses. This initiative was presented by the management of INEC at the meeting with directors of national statistical offices, held in El Salvador on 27 and 28 September 2007, and a resolution is expected to be adopted on the issue.

(e) Education and training activities

Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and a few other countries sent officers from the respective national statistical offices to the fifth regional course on population statistics organized by INDEC in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 21 August to 14 September 2007. The course was designed to train professional and technical staff in tasks linked to the production of population statistics and processing and analysis of census data.

(f) Requests for technical assistance

(i) The representatives of Costa Rica affirmed the need for a general handbook on procedures for supporting management of the national census project.⁵ They said that the handbook should be ready in the second half of 2007, to initiate census activities in the first two months of 2008. In November 2007, a mapping specialist will advise INEC on methodologies.

(ii) The National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Chile requested the United Nations Statistical Division to provide technical assistance in demography in order to strengthen the national capacity for executing the population and housing census scheduled for 2012. The Division will send an expert in demography to Chile in January 2008.

3. Scheduled activities

(a) Uruguay will run the joint pilot test on disability, which has already been fully implemented by the other MERCOSUR countries; the data will be collected in March 2008, on the same dates as for the test on international migration.

(b) In order to continue with the work on the first strategic goal of the Working Group on Censuses, INEGI of Mexico has prepared a project 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 presented to IDB with support from Brazil and Chile. Scheduled to last 18 months, this project will assist countries in applying the measures agreed by the Statistical Conference at its fourth meeting for promoting implementation of resolution 38/102 of the United Nations Statistical Commission during the 2010 round of censuses.

(c) As announced by the President of INEGI at the fourth meeting of the Conference, Mexico is organizing a seminar-workshop on the synergy of census operations. This activity is contemplated as part of the work plan of the Conference's Working Group on Censuses. The United Nations

⁵ A copy of the "Manual de procedimientos administrativos para los Censos Nacionales 1995, Censo Experimental de Mora" was provided as a guide that might be useful in the preparation of the new handbook proposed for the 2010 round of censuses.

Statistics Division has received financial support for some 20 participants and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has received support for about 12. The seminar will take place from 10 to 12 December 2007 in the offices of INEGI in Aguascalientes, Mexico. FAO wishes to add an extra day's deliberations to the two initially planned to deal specifically with the possibility of combining the population and housing censuses with the agricultural census. FAO would be willing to cover the costs of simultaneous interpretation, should representatives of the English-speaking countries be interested in attending.

- (d) In Costa Rica, the Technical Information Services Unit will be conducting a pilot test on an alternative mechanism for scanning questionnaires.
- (e) The National Institute of Statistics of Chile and DGEEC of Paraguay will send mapping experts to the course on practices and analysis in population censuses in South America, which the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is organizing in Tokyo, Japan, from 10 November to 15 December 2007.

4. Annex: Schedule of activities 2007-2009

N°	Goal/ target/ activity	Results/ commitments	Country/ agency responsible	Activities/progress achieved	Cost in dollars (2007)	Date/ place
1.	To implement the second revision of <i>Principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses</i> in keeping with the realities peculiar to each of the countries of the region					
Target 1.1	To review and assess the applicability of United Nations principles and recommendations to each country and the region as a whole	Mexico, the coordinating country, is in charge of monitoring activities on the basis of the proposed targets	Mexico Chile	1.1.1. Mexico, with support from Brazil and Chile, has presented an Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) project for the creation of a portal on international standards to facilitate the harmonization of the production of statistical information in Latin America and the Caribbean		September 2007 Mexico
			Mexico	1.1.2. Compilation and analysis of United Nations statistical standards and principles and recommendations, which will be applied by each country through the project's web page		2008
Target 1.2	To treat the United Nations principles and recommendations as a "manual for constant reference"	Mexico carried out a compilation and analysis of the United Nations principles and recommendations, which it presented at the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas	Mexico Chile CELADE – Population Division of ECLAC United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) United Nations Statistics Division	1.2.1. UNFPA prepared the United Nations Handbook on Census Management for Population and Housing Censuses (1999), which could be updated and adapted in accordance with United Nations standards for the countries of the region. Hiring consultants to prepare the Handbook		2008
2.	To make headway with the harmonization of census information in thematic areas, operation procedures and dissemination for the 2010 round of censuses					
Target 2.1	To harmonize the information in areas relating to housing, households, individuals, other emerging issues and new information requirements among countries in the region	Argentina, the coordinating country, is in charge of monitoring the activities on the basis of the proposed targets	Argentina, coordinator Chile	2.1.1. Create technical groups to produce studies on harmonization, gender, ethnicity, disability and migration		2007-2008
		Proposal for coordination between countries	Argentina Brazil Paraguay	2.1.2. Implementation of the joint pilot study on international migration in Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay	IDB Project	November 2007
			Uruguay	2.1.3. Implementation of the joint pilot test on international migration in Uruguay	IDB project	March - November 2008
Target 2.2	To share and develop jointly methodologies for training, mapping, field work, data collection, processing and dissemination, with		Brazil Chile CELADE - Population Division of	2.2.1. Update the web page of the European Commission/MERCOSUR project for cooperation in statistics II currently available on the IBGE website, incorporating the activities for the IDB project	IDB project	2007 October- December

N°	Goal/ target/ activity	Results/ commitments	Country/ agency responsible	Activities/progress achieved	Cost in dollars (2007)	Date/ place
	special attention to the methodological developments of the dissemination project and evaluation of census statistics harmonized for social programmes for sustainable development in MERCOSUR, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador and Mexico		ECLAC	and its results as well as the relevant statistics. IBGE web page of the Working Group on Censuses: http://www.ibge.gov.br/mercosur		
			Chile CELADE - Population Division of ECLAC	2.2.2. The web pages of the national statistical offices will contain a direct link to the project's web page (Each country will submit the relevant information to the coordinator)		
			CELADE - Population Division of ECLAC	2.2.3. The technical secretariat of the Working Group on Censuses (CELADE - Population Division of ECLAC) will request each member country of the Group to appoint a focal point for making contacts and channelling relevant information on the tasks to be done		2007
Target 2.3	To plan a common database on harmonized variables		Argentina Brazil Chile	2.3.1. To define the indicators to be compiled and published in the database		2007- October 2008
		DANE of Colombia presented a proposal to IDB in relation to its Programme of Regional Public Goods	Colombia	2.3.2. Proposal for the IDB regional public goods project on Integration and Harmonization of Social Statistics 2008-2010		October 2007
Target 2.4	To update information constantly through the project's web page		Brazil	2.4.1. To update the web page of the MERCOSUR/European Union Project with activities of the IDB project		2007
Target 2.5	To consider a selection of variables, which may be at different levels depending on the country		Chile	2.5.1. To reactivate the working group on codes that operated during the 2000 round of censuses		October 2007
			Chile	2.5.2. To study the feasibility of updating ISIC Rev. 4; ISCO 2008		2008
			Chile	2.5.3. To analyse the content of the census questionnaire for the 2010 round, through Internet and videoconference		2008

N°	Goal/ target/ activity	Results/ commitments	Country/ agency responsible	Activities/progress achieved	Cost in dollars (2007)	Date/ place
3.	Promote further training for experts in census activities					
Target 3.1	For the 2010 round of censuses, the countries of the region propose establishing a staff training programme for experts in census activities	Brazil and Colombia, the coordinating countries, are responsible for monitoring activities relating to the proposed targets	Colombia Brazil	3.1.1. To take advantage of the mechanisms for horizontal cooperation to strengthen human resource training		2007-2008
Target 3.2	To promote the maintenance of a permanent core census unit in national statistical offices		Chile	3.2.1. In order to run continuous censuses, produce a report on the technical capacity required and the needs of countries in order to ensure the continuity of core census units		2008
Target 3.3	To promote the on-going preparation of census staff	Documents prepared and presented to the Statistical Conference of the Americas	Knowledge Transfer Network of the Statistical Conference of the Americas Spain Chile	3.3.1. To deepen the analysis of issues addressed in documents submitted at the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC to consider the feasibility of working on the central issues and guidelines presented		2008
3.4	To coordinate with the Knowledge Transfer Network of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC in organizing the relevant technical training courses	Survey of the training requirements of the countries of the Conference for training the Knowledge Transfer Network	Knowledge Transfer Network Spain	3.4.1. To organize an intensive workshop on demography for the national statistical offices in the region		2008