

THE WORLD CENSUS PROGRAM OF 1960

By

MILTON D. LIEBERMAN*

SUMMARY

World wide efforts were made around 1950 by the United Nations and the FAO to have the countries of the world conduct their national censuses. The plan has been given additional impetus and it is hoped that 70-80 nations will conduct census around 1960. Specific steps for census planning include:

1. A series of international and regional conferences on demographic and other statistical subjects have been held. In Southeast Asia the 4th Regional Conference of Statisticians held in Bangkok in 1956 covered the subject matter relating to population censuses.

2. In April 1, 1957, the 5th Regional Conference of Statisticians of the ECAFE region was reconstituted as the Conference of Asian Statisticians. The plenary session was devoted to the agriculture census draft recommendations of the FAO and to the organization and future work program of the CAS.

3. Training opportunities are developing with the opening of the Bombay Demographic Center and the proposed regional training center for census preparations. The training center location has not yet been determined but at this point Japan and India have extended invitations to the United Nations.

4. The U.N., FAO, and the US/ICA are extending technical assistance in statistics. It is expected that such aid will be available for census planning and operations.

*Acting Chief, U. S. Statistical Survey Team. Paper read at the Fifth Annual Conference of the Philippine Statistical Association, Manila, June 22, 1957.

5. Manuals are being prepared by the U.N. and FAO which have been based on the 1950 censuses. These should prove most useful to countries taking censuses:

THE PROGRAM

Originally developed for the period around 1950 the idea of synchronous censuses in the countries of the world has had increasing appeal. The United Nations Statistical Office and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the two agencies which sponsored the so-called world censuses in 1950, are again taking initiative in a proposed world census program. The specific proposals and plans cover population and agriculture censuses.

Even early in this decade the United Nations started creating the machinery for planning the world census program. In 1954 in Rome a world-wide meeting devoted to many phases of population statistics was held. Nearly every nation of the world was represented and many worthwhile papers were produced. Other meetings were held in the western hemisphere and late in 1955 a conference on demographic problems was held in Bandung, Indonesia. The Philippine delegation was headed by Dr. Virata and included Miss Concepcion of the Statistical Center and Dr. Eliseo Perez of the Bureau of the Census. This conference has been described by Dr. Virata at a session of the Philippine Statistical Association early in 1956.

Early in 1956 the Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) and the Statistical Office of the United Nations conducted the Fourth Regional Conference of Statisticians in Bangkok, Thailand. The Philippines was represented at the conference by Mr. Bernardino Bantegui, Director of the Office of Statistical Coordination and Standards. I was privileged to attend the conference as a member of the U.S. delegation. The conference was almost completely devoted to census planning. The agenda covered was as follows:

1. Censuses of population
 - (a) General recommendations and census organization
 - (b) Types of data to be collected
 - (c) Definition and classification of the various types
 - (1) Draft recommendations

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- (2) Population dependent on agriculture
 - (3) Educational characteristics
 - (d) Proposed tabulations
 - (e) Application of sampling
 - (f) Data processing
 - (g) Inter-relationship of censuses
2. Censuses of housing
 3. Proposed system of annual conferences

The conference took note of a statement of the Director of the U.N. Statistical Office concerning the preparation of international recommendations for the 1960 world census program. It was revealed that three other regional meetings of statisticians in Latin America, Europe and the Middle East had considered the draft recommendations. It was further indicated that the U.N. Statistical Commission would examine them in April 1956 and then afterwards a thorough revision of the draft recommendations was to be prepared by U.N. Statistical Office by October 1956. This revision was to be considered by regional groups in Europe and Latin America and in the spring of 1957 by the U.N. Population Commission. In the summer of 1957 the revised recommendations are to be circulated to the various countries for their observations either with the comments of the Population Commission or after a second revision taking these comments into account. Towards the end of 1957 a final draft would be ready on which the Statistical Commission could take action in the spring of 1958.

All representatives at the conference stressed the need of their countries for reliable population census data. Some attention was drawn to special problems of census taking in particular areas where the populations were dispersed or nomadic. The interrelations between population and agricultural censuses were stressed. It was revealed that FAO was preparing proposals for the 1960 agricultural censuses for discussion in 1957.

FAO was also particularly interested in the application of sampling methods to censuses inasmuch as these methods were playing an even more important role in agricultural censuses than in population censuses.

The danger of over-emphasis of the population census was pointed out since it was recognized that a census was only one of the statistical instruments that countries needed to have at their disposal for planning economic and social development. Planning would require the strengthening of the entire range of statistics and, besides the census, other studies such as sampling surveys would have to be adopted. In this connection the Philippine delegate described the PSSH program.

It was generally accepted that censuses should be sponsored and carried on by governments and that data should be obtained by direct field enumeration and not by registration. This implied the obligation of individuals to report and likewise the obligation of government to preserve the confidential nature of census information relating to individuals. There was a general consensus that every person in a defined area should be enumerated with respect to facts relating to one well defined point of time, but there are certain practical difficulties involved in a too strict interpretation, particularly in regard to economic characteristics. Nevertheless the recording of pertinent facts for all individuals is needed in order that important population characteristics be tabulated for the smallest civil or administrative areas.

The use of sampling in enumeration and tabulation was recommended in order to minimize costs and produce needed data faster. The use of preliminary tables was pointed out. It was recommended that printed reports should contain special references to the source of information; one or more administrative reports may be published when convenient.

A comprehensive and systematic check list was considered as extremely useful in census planning and operations. This list together with a time table can serve as a master blue print for census activities. The census budget should comprehend the cost of the entire operation from beginning to end.

There was considerable amount of discussion involved in the substantive phases of a population census. Three conventional forms of schedules were outlined: The individual slip for each person enumerated, the household schedule and the collective (or line) schedule. Comparability of censuses was, of course, heavily stressed. Two points were made regarding

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comparability — (1) data should be comparable with earlier censuses in the country and (2) that regional comparability as well as international comparability be considered.

The conference attempted to come to grips with the problems involved in the willingness and capacity of the respondent and the ability of the enumerator to understand the concepts involved and to elicit replies to the questions posed. Some suggestions were made on appropriate enumeration techniques which would facilitate correct replies to census questions. The value of pilot studies in the inter censal period was underscored. The perennial problem of obtaining accurate reports on age was brought up but no "new" suggestions were forthcoming. A list of so-called basic items of national and international value was set up. These include identification items, personal characteristics, economic characteristics and educational characteristics. Other items which were proposed as additional depending on the countries' needs were also listed; some of these include relationship to head, fertility data, cultural characteristics like language, secondary occupation, physical disabilities, etc.

The conference established some basic definitions which should prove workable and useful for the Philippines. Two important classes were indicated (1) economically active population which includes the following groups:

- (a) Employers, employees, on-account workers, and unpaid family workers
 - (b) Civilians as well as persons in the armed forces
 - (c) Employed persons as well as unemployed, including those never previously employed
 - (d) Persons engaged partly in economic and partly in non-economic activities, as well as those wholly engaged in economic activities
 - (e) Persons employed as domestic servants
- (2) Economically inactive population
- (a) Home houseworkers not engaged in economic activities
 - (b) Students not engaged in economic activities

- (c) Retired persons not engaged in economic activities
- (d) Persons not engaged in economic activities who derive their income from rents, royalties, dividends, pensions, etc.
- (e) Inmates of penal, mental and charitable institutions
- (f) Children too young to work
- (g) Persons too old or unable to work

It was strongly felt that an income question was entirely unsuitable for inclusion in a census in this region and no useful data could be obtained through this means. It was felt that this item could be profitably investigated only by means of sample surveys in this region.

In this connection it should be pointed out that not only the nation's income has been studied in the PSSH but other items which will be most useful for census planning.

The Proposed World Census of Agriculture

Under the sponsorship of FAO many countries took an agriculture census around the 1950 period. However the state of statistical development especially for many of the newly independent countries of southeast Asia precluded a comprehensive and effective agriculture census in all places. During the present decade the FAO again has taken strong leadership in planning for agriculture censuses around the 1960 period. Insofar as this region is concerned the Fifth Regional Conference of Statisticians of Asia and the Far East, which was also the first session of the Conference of Asian Statisticians held in Bangkok in April 1957 was almost completely devoted to reviewing the FAO draft program of the 1960 World Census of Agriculture. Messrs. Bantegui and Gonzales comprised the Philippine delegation and again it was my good fortune to be part of the U.S. delegation which was headed by Ray Hurley, Chief of the Agriculture Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census. He was the first Director of the Philippine Bureau of the Census and Statistics.

The conference took cognizance of the importance of the FAO program for the 1960 world census of agriculture and emphasized the necessity of standardizing definitions, concepts and

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methods to improve both quality and international comparability of statistical data. It was also noted that an increasing number of countries in the ECAFE region have either embarked or are intending to embark on planned economic development in order to attain a higher standard of living. The need for up-to-date and reliable statistics as a basis for economic development planning and for assessing the progress of program implementation was manifest.

The FAO program for the 1960 world census of agriculture was accepted as a good basis for the censuses in the countries of the ECAFE region but certain modifications were proposed for adapting the program to the conditions of the region. There was some discussion of the minimum size of the agricultural holdings to be included in the census and to the area (arable or total) which should be used for measuring the size of the holdings. It was felt that the lowest group of the size classifications as proposed by FAO should be divided as follows:

- 0.0 — 0.1 ha.
- 0.1 — 0.2 "
- 0.2 — 0.3 "
- 0.3 — 0.4 "
- 0.4 — 0.5 "

These are optional subdivisions with the class 0.0 — 0.5 hectares as a minimum requirement. The conference agreed that area actually cultivated and area prepared for cultivation should be included in the census.

Different views were expressed as to whether the population census and the agricultural census should be taken together in one operation or whether they should be taken separately. There was general feeling that in case of separation of the population and agriculture census the population census should come first as this census would be used as a frame for the agriculture census. The identification of holder, holding, and tenure was covered in detail including the census of livestock without any agricultural land. The problem of squatters was also brought up.

Other topics which the conference covered in great detail were as follows: Land utilization, crops, livestock and poultry, employment in agriculture, definition of the farm population, agricultural power and machinery, irrigation and drainage, fertilizers and soil dressings and wood and fishery products.

The conference recognized the great importance of the application of sampling methods in agriculture censuses for the ECAFE region but noted certain difficulties which indicated a need for caution in their application; experts in sampling are a prime prerequisite before embarking on a sampling program. Another prime requisite is the requirement of a good frame which might be provided by a complete census.

The FAO offered its facilities to the member countries in the planning and taking of the 1960 world census of agriculture. These points were brought up by the FAO representative.

1. There were better prospects for FAO assistance in 1960 than in 1950.
2. The FAO is now publishing the reports on the 1950 World Census of Agriculture
 - Vol. 1—Census results by countries
 - Vol. 2—Analysis and scope of 1950 Censuses
 - Vol. 3—National comparison and economic analysis
3. FAO offers its facilities to review proposed questionnaires of individual countries.
4. FAO to issue jointly with the U.N. Statistical Office the latest information on modern census taking including sampling and processing of census data.
5. FAO is planning to organize a training center for census work in this area jointly with the UN Statistical office and perhaps with ECAFE. Similar centers will be set up in Latin America, the near East, and probably tropical Africa. Some system of fellowships for attendance at the training center will be organized. In this connection the representative

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of Japan offered the facilities of his government for the training center. India may make a similar offer.

6. FAO will try to provide individual experts to countries when so requested.

The U.S. delegation noted that assistance is being granted in statistics to countries in the area and that requests for census assistance should be made at an early date.

The Conference of Asian Statisticians agreed to a coordinated plan of carrying on its functions in the next 15-18 months. The Executive Secretary of ECAFE proposed three subjects for the next session (I) Training (II) Censuses of population and agriculture (III) use of sampling methods. Some progress might also be made on capital formation and family budget inquiries. This proposal was accepted as was the plan to have the ECAFE provide the necessary secretariat in the statistical area.

The foregoing, while seemingly detailed, is in reality only a very broad picture of the world and regional planning going on in the census fields. It is certainly comforting to know that the international agencies are showing leadership in the efforts of member countries to create good statistical systems which can produce vitally required data, and it is certainly a comfort and pleasure to report that your Philippine Government officials charged with the responsibility of working and improving the statistical series and planning the censuses are hard at work on the multitudinous details of these tremendous undertakings. At both conferences your government was represented and played an important part in the deliberations of the delegates. As a matter of fact last April, Directors Bantegui and Gonzales were most active in the formulation of the final draft of the conference proceedings and were most impressive in their participation and leadership. The work of census planning is going on now and will continue at increasing tempo until the census results are published.