



Workshop on the World Programme for the Censuses of Agriculture 2020 Amman, Jordan, 16-19 May, 2016

Concluding Statement

Purpose: The Workshop aimed at disseminating among the countries from the Near East and North Africa region participating in the event the new guidelines for the World Census for Agriculture Programme 2020, Volume 1 (WCA 2020), which covers the period 2016-2025.

Participants: In the Workshop participated 20 representatives from 12 countries which included Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen.

STATEMENT

1. The participants welcomed the new WCA 2020 guidelines and highly appreciated the content and timing of the Workshop which are of great importance, especially taking into account that some countries already started the preparation to their censuses planned to be carried out in the years 2016 and 2017.
2. The participants agreed that the Workshop's results met its main objective to help the participants to gain a deeper understanding of the WCA 2020 for the implementation of their agricultural censuses under the 2020 round.
3. The workshop discussed census related issues, such as:
 - a) the census themes included in WCA 2020, with the deeper discussion of the new themes and census items,
 - b) conceptual approaches to be adopted for collecting data on many emerging subjects,
 - c) some operational aspects of census taking, e.g.: design of census questionnaires; use of new technologies (such as CAPI method for data collection),
 - d) countries experiences regarding census taking, with the sharing of best practices and lessons learned, which are relevant for the successful implementation of the next national censuses,
 - e) the plans of the countries for implementing agricultural census and surveys under the 2020 round.
4. The workshop also discussed other topics, relevant for the implementation of the integrated agricultural statistics systems, such as:
 - The Global Strategy to improve agricultural and rural statistics, and its Action Plan,

- Recent methodological developments, i.e. the Master Sampling Frame (MSF) and the Agricultural Integrated Survey (AGRIS).
5. During the Workshop group discussions were also organized regarding the various census themes and items with the purpose of identifying the items with the highest relevance for countries, as well as the challenges faced by countries to implement them and possible solutions to overcome these.
 6. The following countries confirmed plans for conducting censuses under the 2020 round: Jordan (2017, according to classical approach), Tunisia (2017, modular approach), Sudan (2017, modular approach), Mauritania (2017, using AGRIS census/survey modality), Palestine (2020, classical approach), Egypt (2020, modular approach). Djibouti plans to conduct livestock census in 2016. Morocco currently conducts census field data collection.
 7. Countries expressed high interest in consulting census materials such as questionnaires and reports from other countries available from the FAO web repository. Some countries' materials related to the census conducted under WCA 2010 were provided to FAO during the meeting and some more will be provided later to complete the existing gaps in the FAO web census repository.
 8. The participants acknowledged and highlighted the importance of census data collection of the minimum set of items, i.e. of all essential items to enable international comparison, as well as of relevant frame and additional items to meet the information needs of stakeholders and statistical needs for building up the frames for the follow up regular agricultural and other surveys. The countries representatives emphasized the necessity to avoid the duplication of data collection (through the census and other statistical surveys and available reliable administrative data sources suitable for statistical purposes) in order to avoid overburdening of the census questionnaire with the information which is more appropriate to collect on a regular basis through current sample surveys (e.g. items on agricultural production, quantity of fertilizers used, status of employment and status of the main job, etc.).
 9. The participants mentioned about existing problems in some countries related to the lack of a good coordination and cooperation between National Statistics Office (NSO) and Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) when censuses are prepared and implemented. Participants highlighted the critical importance of the coordination between government agencies including NSO and MoA.
 10. The benefits of synchronizing the population and agricultural censuses were widely discussed. However, the operational difficulties were highlighted, especially those related to: the specificity of some agriculture census items, which are more sensitive and/or more challenging to collect; timing discrepancies; increasing burden on population census; the coordination between different government agencies involved in the two operations.
 11. The participants highlighted the importance of organizing workshops on census implementation, especially to discuss in more detail the implementation of concepts, such as: identification of the statistical units (holdings), particularly when aquaculture, fisheries and forestry items/activities are included; area of crops; working time on the holding; environment/greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions items, etc.; as well as operational aspects of the conduct of the census (describing in detail the ways how to implement specific census modalities, etc.).

12. The participants highlighted the relevance and the high importance of the development of the new FAO guidelines (WCA 2020, Volume 2) regarding operational aspects of census taking and encouraged FAO to finalize this publication at the earliest.
13. The participants made a set of recommendations, as follows:

RECOMMENDATIONS

14. Taking into account the importance of the Volume 2 of WCA 2020 “Operational Guidelines” which is currently under FAO development, the participants encourages FAO to finalize its preparation at the earliest with the follow-up large dissemination, including the organization of trainings/workshops.
15. To ask FAO to continue to provide technical assistance to countries on the implementation of the censuses of agriculture.
16. The participants welcomed and asked to continue, at the extent possible, the FAO practice to invite for the census workshops the representatives from both agencies naturally involved in census preparation and conduct: NSOs and MoAs.
17. The participants asked FAO headquarters and regional office for the Near East to support study tours by NSO and MoA staff to observe the field-work for census of agriculture in countries at the stage of census taking.
18. Countries were recommended to make sure to include in their Country Programming Framework (CPF) all their needs in the area of agricultural census. The CPF is a document prepared by each country and FAO to define the medium-term response to the assistance needs of member countries in pursuit of national development objectives.
19. The participants wish to express gratitude to the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS) and to FAO for the very good organization of the Workshop.