



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

**Regional Roundtable on the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020  
(WCA 2020), Bangkok, Thailand, 19-23 September 2016**

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE MEETING**

**Purpose:** The Roundtable aimed at disseminating among member countries from Asia and the Pacific Region participating in the event the new guidelines for the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020 (WCA 2020), Volume 1, which covers the period 2016-2025. The meeting was specifically intended to help participants gain a deeper understanding of the new census modalities to data collection and new census themes and items being advocated by FAO through this new Programme.

**Participants:** In the Roundtable participated 65 participants, including:

- 46 participants from 22 member countries from Asia and the Pacific Region, which included Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, Viet Nam, and USA. The participants were directly involved in the organization of agricultural census or related statistical operations in their respective countries;
- Representatives from partner organizations (ADB, the Australian Embassy and ESCAP), FAO Headquarters and FAO RAP, including the Global Strategy regional team. The list of participants is presented in Annex 1.

1. Mr Theerapat Prayurasiddhi, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives opened the meeting with his welcome remarks on behalf of General Chatchai Sarikulya, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Thailand. H.E San Vanty Secretary of State on behalf of H.E. Veng Sakhon, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Cambodia delivered a statement which was followed by a key note address by Kundhavi Kadiresan, Assistant Director General, Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, FAO. Mr Jairo Castano provided the opening address on behalf of Mr Pietro Gennari, Chief Statistician and Director of Statistics Division, FAO, and made an introduction to the Roundtable.

2. The participants welcomed the new WCA 2020 guidelines and highly appreciated the content and timing of the Roundtable which are of great importance, especially taking into account that some countries already started the preparation of their censuses planned to be carried out in the near future. The hard copy of the FAO publication on WCA 2020 was made available to the participants for reference during the meeting. However, before the meeting, the participants were encouraged to consult the publication also available on the FAO web site at <http://www.fao.org/economic/ess/ess-wca/wca-2020/en/>.

- 3.** Following the opening, an Expert Panel discussion on Agricultural Censuses took place with the participation of representatives from China, Timor Leste, USA, the Australian Embassy and ESCAP.
- 4.** The meeting was organized into 17 technical sessions, each session focusing on a specific technical aspect of the WCA 2020. Each technical session comprised both FAO and country presentations, followed by discussions. A total of 54 technical papers were presented and discussed. Technical session 2 was a roundtable discussion on countries census plans, approaches and methodologies. The meeting programme is presented in Annex 2.
- 5.** The following countries confirmed/informed plans for conducting censuses under the 2020 round: Afghanistan (2020), Bangladesh (2018), Bhutan (2017/2018, probably using integrated census/survey modality based on AGRIS), Cambodia (2023, modular approach), China (2016, classical approach), India (2015/2016), Indonesia (2023, classical approach), Iran, Islamic Republic of (2023/2024, classical approach), Republic of Korea (2020), Lao PDR (2020), Malaysia (2023), Maldives (2023), Mongolia (2022, classical approach), Myanmar (2020), Nepal (2021/2022, sample-based census), Pakistan (2017, sample based), Philippines (2023), Sri Lanka (2023, classical approach), Thailand (2023), Timor Leste (2018), USA (2017, classical approach) and Viet Nam (2016).
- 6.** 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 (country metadata reports, reports on census results, other census products and material) 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.
- 7.** The participants acknowledged the importance of census data collection of all recommended essential items to enable international comparison, as well as for obtaining 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 census content may be extended by countries taking into account countries information needs and priorities, based on consultation with data users and the relevant producers of official statistics.
- 8.** The country participants emphasized the necessity to avoid the duplication of data collection in the census, current statistical surveys and relevant administrative data sources. They agree on the importance of avoiding overburdening the census questionnaire with current statistics (e.g. items on agricultural production, quantity of fertilizes used for agricultural production, etc.).
- 9.** The participants highlighted a range of existing difficulties related to timely an adequate financing of census operations. Methodological considerations for the census design, taking into account the needs for improving the cost-efficiency of the census were widely discussed. In this respect the modular approach (introduced in the WCA 2010), as well as the integrated census

and survey programme (in particular the AGRIS concept) and the combined modality with use of administrative registers (the latter two were introduced in the new guidelines) were seen as having good potential for building an integrated agricultural statistical system. Country experiences on linking Population and Housing Censuses with Agricultural Censuses as well as the benefits of synchronizing the population and agricultural censuses were extensively discussed. The necessity and methods to ensure wide and user-friendly access to census results to support evidence-based decisions at the national and sub national levels were also discussed.

**10.** Extensive discussions took place on problematic issues of census data collection, such as:

- identification and location of agricultural holdings (particularly when a holding has parcels in different villages/administrative units);
- collecting data on area of parcels, total area of holding and area according to land use types (in particular related to difficulties to collect data: on “homeland”, i.e. land surrounding the holder’s house, by land use types; in cases of the mixture of land uses in a parcel or field; in countries where non-standard area measurement units are used);
- defining main agricultural activity of the holding;
- estimation of individual area of crops in the mixture (mixed crops);
- accounting of nomadic livestock;
- measurement of working time on the holding;
- data collection on holdings’ agricultural practices, such as on types of tillage practices, sources of irrigation water (in particular of treated wastewater), etc.

It was pointed out, that in order to ensure complete coverage of the area of holdings and to enable census data collection by land use types, countries may wish (if relevant), to make specific provision in the census questionnaires for: i) the area of land surrounding the holder’s house and ii) other parcels, to be split into land use types.

**11.** Presentations from FAO and ADB on new technologies for field data capture and compilation, and country presentations from Iran and Thailand on the use of CAPI method were discussed. The participants pointed out the significance of the use of new technologies for field data capture and compilation and important activities performed in this respect by the World Bank and FAO/ Global Strategy Office. However, participants agreed that there were still many areas which needed further improvement, e.g. in “Survey Solutions”, in particular based on findings of the use of CAPI in the Global Strategy assisted projects in Indonesia and other countries.

**12.** During the meeting other aspects of production and dissemination of census results were also discussed, such as ensuring data confidentiality when presenting census data and the use of relevant standard statistical classifications (such as ISIC), classifications recommended in the WCA 2020 (i.e. of land use, crop, livestock, machinery and equipment) and of tabulation classes to enable international comparison of the main census results. In this respect, it was pointed out that when using their own well-established classifications, countries should ensure the production and dissemination of census results according to the international standards and recommendations mentioned above.

**13.** The participants highlighted the importance of the development of new FAO guidelines on operational aspects of census taking (WCA 2020, Volume 2) and welcomed FAO efforts. It was emphasized the relevance and usefulness of providing recommendations and best country examples through this publication and other FAO and Global Strategy publications (e.g. on census questionnaires). The usefulness of video materials/training courses to support FAO publications were also noted.

**14.** The participants highlighted the importance of organizing such meetings on census taking, especially to discuss in more detail about census concepts, definitions, different country experiences and the difficulties associated with practical implementation.

#### **FINAL REMARKS**

**15.** The participants agreed that the Roundtable's results met its main objective to help the participants gain a deeper understanding of the WCA 2020 for the implementation of their agricultural censuses under the 2020 round.

**16.** Countries acknowledged the continuous FAO assistance on agricultural censuses in the region and looked forward to receiving further guidance in the new census round.

**17.** Countries encouraged FAO, Global Strategy office and the World Bank to improve and provide further support on the implementation of new technologies for census data capture and processing.

**18.** Countries agreed to provide missing census material and reports to FAO in order to facilitate the documentation of censuses and the preparation of good country practices.

**19.** The participants expressed gratitude to the FAO and AFMA (Agricultural and Food Marketing Association for Asia and the Pacific) for a very good organization of the Roundtable.