Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Webinar on the Operational Guidelines of the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020 (WCA 2020)

Virtual Meeting, 24-26 November 2020

Purpose: This Webinar complements our roundtables on the FAO World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020 (WCA 2020) Round, which aims at disseminating among the countries from the Anglophone African region the Operational Guidelines[1] of the WCA 2020 (Volume 2), which covers the period 2016-2025. The meeting offered participants a deeper understanding of the new census guidelines, with the main focus on the practical aspects of the conduct of an agricultural census, from census planning and preparation to its implementation, until data dissemination and archiving of census results with the opportunity to share countries experiences in census taking.

Organizers: The Eastern Africa Statistical Training Center of Tanzania (EASTC) and FAO Statistics Division (FAO-ESS, Rome), in collaboration with the FAO Regional Office for Africa (FAORAF, Accra) and the FAO Sub-Regional Office for Eastern Africa (FAOSFE, Addis-Ababa).

Participants: 42 participants attended the Webinar, of which were 34 representatives from 17 countries, namely: Botswana, Eritrea, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe plus representatives from EASTC and FAO. Eswatini, Mozambique, Mauritius and Nigeria did not send participants. All participants were directly involved in agricultural censuses (ACs) and surveys and analysis of their results. The list of participants is attached in **Annex 1**.

Dr. Frank Mkumbo, Rector of the Eastern Africa Statistical Training Center of Tanzania – EASTC, was represented by Dr Tumaini Katunzi, Deputy Rector Planning, Finance, and Administration Tanzania, and delivered the welcoming remarks to the participants of the Webinar. Mr. Jairo Castano, Team Leader, Agricultural Censuses and Surveys, FAO Statistics Division, FAO-ESS, delivered the opening remarks.

The participants appreciated the Operational Guidelines of the WCA 2020. FAO encouraged the participants to consult the dedicated website guidelines as they could be found on the FAO website http://www.fao.org/world-census-agriculture/wcarounds/wca2020/en/. The presentations and reference materials are accessible at the FAO website http://www.fao.org/index.php?id=101604.

1. The meeting included eight technical sessions (including one roundtable), covering the main chapters of the Operational Guidelines of the WCA 2020. Technical sessions consisted of presentations by FAO and country presentations, followed by discussions.

[1] FAO. 2018. World programme for the census of agriculture 2020. Volume 2 Operational Guidelines. FAO statistical development series 16. Rome. 348 pp. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

2. A total of 20 presentations were delivered and discussed, of which 11 were delivered by FAO and nine by countries. The meeting programme is presented in **Annex 2**.

3. Two countries have conducted an agricultural census in the WCA 2020 round: Ghana in 2017/2018 and South Africa in 2017. Ghana implemented the modular approach, with the core module implemented in 2017/2018 while the supplementary modules will be conducted in 2021. South Africa conducted a classical census. An essential feature of these two ACs is that countries used new technology (CAPI) for census data collection.

4. The following countries confirmed/informed of plans to conduct ACs under the WCA 2020 round: Botswana (2025, classical census), Eritrea (2022 but not firm plans), Ethiopia (2023 if the population census is implemented in 2022), Gambia (2021, sample based census), Ghana (see above), Kenya (agricultural module in PHC 2019, sample-based census in 2021), Lesotho (2020/2021, sample-based census, data collection in January 2021), Liberia (2022 tentatively, plan to include screening questions in PHC 2021), Malawi (no response), Namibia (PHC in 2021 with screening questions and AC in 2023/2024, sample-based census), Rwanda (no plans, the country conducts Seasonal Agricultural Surveys), Seychelles (PHC postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19 and AC in 2022 tentatively), South Africa (see above; the next one will be conducted in 2022), Tanzania (data collection conducted in August-October 2020, sample-based census), Uganda (2023 for crops and aquaculture and May 2021 for livestock), Zambia (tentatively 2022, possibly a module in PHC 2021) and Zimbabwe (2023 tentatively).

5. Countries' census materials from the WCA 2020 round were requested to be provided to FAO during the meeting (reports on census results, questionnaires, other census products and material). These materials are being used to complete the existing gaps in the FAO web census repository available at http://www.fao.org/world-census-agriculture/wcarounds/wca2020/countries2020/en/ as well as for the preparation of the country metadata reports to be published later. The following countries assured to provide materials already available, during the meeting: Kenya (report of the agricultural module included in the PHC 2019), South Africa (methodology and instruction manuals of AC 2017), Tanzania (methodology, questionnaire and instruction manuals of AC 2020) and Ghana (instruction manuals, tabulation plan of AC 2017/2018). More materials will be provided by other countries later as soon as available.

6. During the roundtable discussion FAO offered the countries to assist them on demand in the formulation of screening questions or modules for the Population and Housing Census (PHC) in order to establish reliable frames for the census of agriculture. The Operational Guidelines discusses these topics and there was a joint FAO-UNFPA publication on them (see below).

7. Many participants highlighted a range of existing difficulties related to the impact of the COVID 19 on census activities, timely and adequate financing of census operations, lack of up to date census frames and also recognized the importance in maximizing the use and dissemination of census data. Methodological considerations for the census design, considering the needs for improving the census's cost-efficiency were discussed. The participants noted that

the modular approach (introduced in the WCA 2010) was cost-efficient and vital to establishing integrated agricultural statistical systems for countries lacking such systems.

8. The methodological challenges and ways to overcome the difficulties in the modular approach related to implementing the core and supplementary modules, widely used in African countries, were also discussed. In this respect, the requirements of census taking for this modality (along with other census modalities) were highlighted, such as:

- identification of all census modules at the early stage of census preparation and securing the funding for all census modules and operations;
- the census should cover the agricultural holding in the household and non-household sectors, especially all large farms which have a significant contribution to total agricultural production;
- the collection of all relevant frame items in the core module;
- implementation of supplementary modules in due time after the core module (or agricultural module in the Population and Housing Census, if relevant) to avoid frame data obsolescence.

9. The benefits of synchronizing the PHCs and ACs were discussed. The use of screening questions or an agriculture module in the PHC to identify agricultural holdings in the household sector to establish a census frame was discussed in detail. Participants noted that the FAO/UNFPA Guidelines discuss practical ways of including agricultural items in the PHC. The Operational Guidelines and e-learning courses are available at http://www.fao.org/3/i2680e/i2680e.pdf and http://gsars.org/en/e-learning-course-on-linking-population-housing-censuses-with-agricultural-censuses/.

10. Extensive discussions took place on other specific issues, such as:

- The identification of agricultural holdings, especially in the household sector and the difference between the household sector and non-household sectors;
- The difference between "own-account" agricultural production activities and agricultural labourers/workers;
- When a frame is considered obsolete and options to update it;
- The use of the PHC and administrative data sources to prepare the frame of agricultural holdings;
- Use of administrative registers as a data source for some census items;
- The difference between pre-tests and tests (questionnaires) and pilot census (census dry run);
- Use of sampling for census data collection;
- Implementing a Post Enumeration Survey,
- Use of CAPI, its software and challenges

11. Various issues related to planning, organization of field work (including pre-test and pilot census), as well as census data collection, data processing and archiving and the use of technology were discussed. The use of new technologies such as CAPI, CATI and CAWI for field data capture and compilation drew vivid interest and participants noted the advantages and disadvantages.

12. The participants appreciated the relevance and usefulness of providing recommendations and best country practices through the WCA 2020, Volume 2 publication and other related FAO publications.

FINAL REMARKS

13. The participants agreed that the Webinar achieved its objective to help the participants gain a deeper understanding of the WCA 2020 guidelines and share countries' experiences in census taking to assist them in the implementation of their agricultural censuses in the 2016 - 2025 period.

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15. The participants welcomed the new WCA 2020 Operational Guidelines. They highly appreciated the Webinar's content and timing, especially taking into account that some countries have already started the preparation or are in the process of conducting their censuses.

16. The participants acknowledged the continuous assistance provided by FAO to countries' agricultural censuses in the region. They looked forward to receiving further guidance for the preparation and implementation of the ACs within the overall framework of the system of integrated agricultural censuses and surveys. Countries acknowledged the need to collaborate closely with national stakeholders, FAO and other development partners to include the agricultural census as a priority for country assistance by FAO and the donor community.

17. Countries agreed to provide within one week the missing census materials and reports to FAO to facilitate the documentation of censuses and disseminate good country practices.

18. The participants expressed gratitude to EASTC and to FAO (RAF, SFE, and ESS) for the excellent organization of the Webinar.