منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة
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Roundtable Meeting on
Programme for the 2010 Round of Censuses of Agriculture
Santiago, Chile, 22 – 26 September, 2008

REPORT OF MEETING

The aim of the meeting was to present the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010 (WCA 2010) to countries of the Latin American region. The programme covers censuses of agriculture for the period 2006–2015 and is given in *FAO Statistical Development Series No 11: A System of Integrated Agricultural Censuses and Surveys; Volume 1 - World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010*, issued in November 2005 (Spanish version: 2007). The meeting was intended to help participants gain a better understanding of the new strategy advocated in the programme, especially the modular approach to data collection promoted by FAO, and to review the plans of the countries for implementing the 2010 round of agricultural censuses and surveys.

The meeting was opened by Mr José Graziano Da Silva, Assistant Director Regional and Regional Representative FAORLC with an inaugural speech welcoming the participants. He highlighted the increasing demands for data and the role of the Agricultural Census to meet those needs and the main changes in the concept of Census of Agriculture through the different rounds. These issues were reinforced by Mr Som, Chief, Country Statistics Service, FAO, Rome in his opening remarks.

The meeting was organized into 17 technical sessions, each session focusing on a specific technical aspect of WCA 2010. Each session comprised several presentations and a discussion of issues rose.

The main discussion points in each session are summarized below. Some general conclusions of the meeting are also presented

Technical session 1: Overview of the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010

The main features of WCA 2010 were outlined. Particular attention was given to integrating the agricultural census with the agricultural statistics system, links between the population and agricultural censuses, the modular approach being advocated by FAO, the proposed data items, the inclusion of community-level data, and the use of the agricultural census for monitoring the MDGs and for capturing the gender dimension.

The benefits of coordinating the population and agricultural censuses, the inclusion of community level data, the inclusion of aquaculture and the importance of food security and MDG data were also highlighted.

Technical session 2: Integration of the Agricultural Census in the National Programme for Surveys and Modular Approach to Surveys

The presentation highlighted aspects of statistical integration in WCA 2010, especially the use of the modular approach and coordinating the population and agricultural censuses. Dominican Republic after summarizing the main characteristics of the last census operations (1971, 1982) reported on the

plans for integration the forthcoming agricultural census in the national survey programme following its experience with the integration of population censuses, National Health Survey; Expenditure and Income Household Survey; Labor Survey and the new Multipurpose National Survey. Venezuela also explained the characteristics of the current Census of Agriculture and its integration with the National Statistical System in particular the uses of the new census in constructing a multiple-purpose frame for next agricultural surveys and on the definition of the rural component of the Population Census. Countries agreed on the importance of integration but highlighted the problems faced in coordination between different government agencies.

Technical session 3: **Land and Water Resources in the Census of Agriculture**

The changes made to FAO's agricultural census programme in this area were discussed with particular attention on land tenure, land conservation, land use and irrigation. The delegate from Honduras highlighted the experience of Honduras in the past census and explained plans for the next census emphasizing in the collection of data on soil degradation and water management. The main issues raised in the discussion were how to measure soil erosion in an Agricultural Census. The use of community level data and data from external sources with that end were also explored.

Technical session 4: **Demographic Characteristics of Agricultural Households and Farm Labour**

The application of international concepts to the collection of labour-related data in the agricultural census was outlined in the presentation. Panama showed national plans for integrating population census data with agricultural census data on these issues. The importance of international standards was recognized by countries. The particular problems of linking data from the census of agriculture with those of the population census derived from the use of different statistical units were discussed. The need of the use of common concepts and definitions, the same cartography and a common identification system for households was widely recognized.

Technical session 5: **Country-Stat presentation**

A one-hour video-conference from the Statistical Division at FAO HQ was developed. Several questions were raised from the participants and a particular interest in incorporating FAO-Stat in their respective statistical systems was apparent after the discussion.

Technical session 6: **Crops and livestock in the Census of Agriculture**

The new modular approach has a strong incidence in the way countries would take information about crops and livestock. However, the majority of participants agreed in maintaining several variables in the main questionnaire undertaken on a complete enumeration exercise instead of transferring to sample-based modules. Budgetary constraints were highlighted. Complementary modules to be applied not by sampling but on the basis of the holding characteristics have also been discussed. Delegates of Argentina and Paraguay presented their Census of Agriculture and showed the experience of their countries about these items. A side discussion on the contracts of part of census operations with private firms followed. The need of being very careful with contracts to third parties in maintaining confidentiality of census data was also an issue of special consideration.

Technical session 7**: Agricultural Practices and Agricultural Services in the Census of Agriculture**

FAO proposals for new data on agricultural services were outlined. Costa Rican plans for introducing the new items proposed by the Programme 2010 were extensively explained. Methodological and practical issues associated with data on machinery and equipment were raised. Internet transactions by holders and its role in the reduction of transactions costs should also be included in the complementary modules. Also a precise definition of technical assistance was required.

Technical session 8: **Aquaculture in the Census of Agriculture**

FAO proposals for providing the option for countries to conduct a joint agricultural/aquacultural census were outlined. The difference between aquaculture as a secondary activity of an agricultural holding and an aquacultural holding was also stressed. El Salvador showed how the recent National Agricultural Census is dealing with this issue. The economic census usually does not cover aquaculture because it is developed in rural areas. This is a strong reason for including it in the same operation as the agricultural census. Some technical issues were raised, such as the inclusion of water bodies in measuring the area of holding. Aquaculture seems not to be very important in LA countries.

Technical session 9: **Community-level Statistics**

The presentations outlined FAO's proposals for including community-level data for the first time in WCA 2010, and Cuba's experience with the collection of these data. The value of community-level data for both tabulating the characteristics of communities and for analysis in relation to holding-level data was highlighted. Organizational aspects of the National Statistical System in Cuba was depicted to explain the institutional frame which enables to collect community level data on a current (monthly) basis. There was general support for including these data in the new programme. The use of the census administrative structure for collecting community-level data was also explored. Qualitative data would be also undertaken because they add information but it is recognized the difficulties to collect them. Data reliability issues and linking community-level data from different sources were also discussed.

Technical Session 10: Agricultural Census and Agricultural Surveys frames.

The role of the Census of Agriculture for building frames for Agricultural Surveys as well as the need of frames for conducting a Census of Agriculture were careful explained. The use of the agricultural census in this aspect in the 2007 Chilean Census of Agriculture was detailed. In first place Chile presented the analysis performed from the census of agriculture (typology of farmers, thematic maps, evaluation of catastrophes, capacity to incorporate technologies by area, etc.). The inter-census survey programme in Chile covers the period 2008-2016 having the 2007 Census of Agriculture as main frame. Participants showed special interest in census operations. The up-dating of census frames was an issue of generalized concern.

Technical session 11: The Census of Agriculture and the Millennium Development Goals.

Two presentations were given; outlining the potential role of the agricultural census in monitoring MDGs. It was pointed out that the MDGs do not are rural orientated and household surveys are a better tool than the census of agriculture to track the MDGs, in particular now in this region, where an increase of participation of non agricultural income is observed at household level. It was agreed that the agricultural census give a very good picture of the structure which is very important to analyze the factors influencing poverty and external shock impacts. The agricensus allows also the definition of clusters of holders to research the situation of each group with respect to poverty. The need of more data from the census about hired workers was also stressed. The accessibility of holders to markets is very important to access poverty and the census should provide those data. Here geo-referenced information is crucial. It was agreed that giving greater emphasis to these aspects can help lift the profile of the agricultural census. Not only poverty but also for tracking Objective # 3 (to promote gender equality) the census of agriculture is very important and they should cover three aspects: 1.To show the role of women in agricultural production; 2. To highlight the inequality between men and women and 3. To show the structural conditions which limit women participation in agriculture. To reach these objectives, a special module is not enough; the other modules should incorporate gender considerations too. Finally to follow Objective #7 (environmental sustainability) the census is very useful too. Objective #8 is tracked also by means of the census of agriculture in particular evaluation the type of holdings affected by the free trade agreements. The need of special post-census studies on these issues was highlighted by FAO. Some technical issues in the measurement of poverty and food

insecurity were discussed, including defining the poverty line, identifying food security indicators, and the possibility of including some social indicators in the agricultural census.

Technical session 12: The post-census agricultural survey system.

The role of the census of agriculture in the design of the system of agricultural surveys was presented by FAO. The sampling enumeration for the National Agricultural Census 2000 along with the system of current agricultural surveys in Ecuador was presented. Plans of Ecuador for the 2012 Census of Agriculture were also showed. An important point highlighted was the plan of Ecuador to strengthening the present current agricultural system with FAO assistance through the Project TCP/ECU/3102 already initiated. Special interest was put in the need that governments maintain the statistical plans and provide resources to that end. Special interest was put in the efficiency of the system in the sense of cost vis-à-vis accuracy. Other participants also share their particular concerns.

Technical session 13: **Use of Information Technology for the Agricultural Censuses**

A short presentation on the advances of new information and communication technologies and the problems, opportunities and challenges of their adoption by countries was made by FAO. The presentations outlined three approaches to the use of information technology for data processing of agricultural censuses: use of REDATAM for processing, analysis and dissemination of census results with emphasis in agricultural data (ECLAC) and general characteristics, processing and training for decentralized capture of census data (Chile) and scanning and quality control (Uruguay). The specific case of the 2006/07 Census of Agriculture in Brazil in the use of REDATAM was exemplified. Training by means of e-learning in Chile was extensively used. It was agreed the need of conducting pilot studies to evaluate the incorporation of new technologies. The high cost was another problem cited by some countries. The preservation of statistical confidentiality of data was another issue of concern when using new devices. A precise definition of contractual clauses in agreements to be signed with private firms was also highlighted.

Technical session 14: **Gender considerations in the Census of Agriculture.**

FAO's efforts to introduce gender issues in the Census of Agriculture and the FAO's new concepts of "sub-holding" and "sub-holder" as means of better reflecting gender issues in the management of holdings were presented. Information on the division of work and responsibilities in rural households and data on temporary works were highlighted as items to incorporate in agricultural censuses to analyze the role of women. The gender orientated approach taken by Chile in the 2007 Census of Agriculture and Forestry was detailed. It was agreed in the need of integrating time-use surveys in the system of agricultural statistics. The special study on "Participation of women in the agricultural sector in Nicaragua" from the 2001 Nicaragua Census of Agriculture" was also presented. There was general agreement in the importance of maintaining gender oriented censuses.

Technical Session 15**: New techniques for census and surveys enumeration.**

This session was, in some way, the follow-up of Technical Session 13. IT specifically applied to field data collection were extensively presented in this session. It comprised, in particular, the use of Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI). Countries showed their interest in a better knowledge of the possibilities offered by these new technologies to collect information in censuses and surveys. The delegate from Brazil detailed the use of CAPIs in the 2006 Census of Agriculture in Brazil where GPS were also used. The editing of agricultural atlas and the use of geo-referencing to deep the knowledge of protected land areas along with the elaboration of agricultural survey frames were also discussed. The delegate from Colombia presented the 2005 Colombia Census of Agriculture enumerated in a joint field operation with the Population Census using those new technologies. At present, Colombia is assessing the use of the new devices in census and surveys undertaking. The use of geo-referencing was explained through the census of urban trees in Bogotá. The use of Mobile Devices for Capture (DMC) on the 2007 Colombia Census of Rice was also presented. Venezuela also

presented its experience and delivered useful recommendations on this issue. The excellent experiences of Brazil and Venezuela were broadly recognized by all countries. Delegates agreed in the need of sharing good experiences in the use of CAPIs in the region by means of training from countries which have been successful in their use, to other countries of the region.

Technical Session 16: **Links between the Census of Agriculture and the Population Census.**

The coordination between the Census of Population and the Agricultural Census is recommended by the WCA 2010. Peru presented its experience in this issue. Having undertaken the Population Census in 2007, Peru is planning the Census of Agriculture for 2009. Peru is building a "data warehouse" and in this context the Agricultural Census is linked to the Census of Population: using the same enumeration areas, much of the technical staff who worked in the Population and in the Economic Censuses, the same technological infrastructure, the same basic concepts and an interrelationship between the Population and Housing Census 2007, the National Economic Census 2008 and the National Agricultural Census 2009 as well as the signing of agreements of cooperation. The problems coming from the use of different periods of reference in labour related data by both censuses to develop adequate frames for the Agricultural Census were also highlighted. For that reason, Peru used settlements for building the census frame: settlements were classified according to number of rural households in them from the Population Census. Resistance to incorporate questions to identify farms in the Census of Population was also discussed. It was emphasized the need for long-term plans on the census in the national statistical systems in order to plan well in time the necessary arrangements.

Technical session **17: Statistical Classifications for Agricultural Censuses.**

Main census classifications proposed by FAO in the WCA 2010 were presented and classifications for land use, crops, livestock and machinery were described in more detail. Bolivia presented a brief summary of its activities in agricultural statistics. Afterwards, it summarized the FAO recommendations for this theme and its plans in this regard for the forthcoming National Agricultural Census. It is recognized that each country can develop their own classifications but allowing international comparisons and along the lines of FAOSTAT

Field trip **:** A one-day visit to a vineyard and winery holding near Santiago developed.

General Conclusions.

The following findings emerged from the meeting:

- In the light of technological changes recently operated is suggested that FAO updates its publication "Conducting agricultural censuses and surveys" dated in 1996;

- FAO should update the publication "Agricultural Censuses and Gender considerations: Concepts and Methodology" of 2001.

- Countries in the region who have successfully tested the use of new technologies for censuses and surveys should be considered in order to convey their experiences to countries which are planning their next census and surveys on a horizontal cooperation basis.

- The Statistics Division of FAO should plan training on CountryStat in the languages of the region for countries applying for joining the system.

- A technical meeting to take place before the end of the Round 2010 should be planned to assess it development and incorporate national experiences and new developments in the area for the next program (WCA 2020)

• It is recommended to explore the possibility of incorporating a new data module about rural women in FAOSTAT.