

**Challenges and Opportunities for Advocacy and Resource
Mobilization for the 2010 Round of Censuses**

By

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This paper attempts to take stock of the lessons learned from the earlier round of censuses, discuss the challenges that confront the 2010 census round and highlight opportunities for further advocating the importance of censuses and mobilizing the necessary resources to ensure the success of this round.

I - International Context

The ICPD Plan of Action adopted in 1994 clearly stated, “valid, reliable, timely, culturally relevant and internationally comparable data form the basis for policy and programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation” (ICPD Chapter 12, 12.1). The Five Year Review of the ICPD in 1999 urged the United Nations system and donors “to strengthen the capacity of developing countries particularly the least developed countries and those with economies in transition, to undertake censuses and surveys on a regular basis.” Chapter II, section F.

The aim behind these recommendations was to strengthen the national individual and institutional capacity of developing countries in data gathering, processing and analysis, in setting up well functioning monitoring and evaluation system and in using the data for development planning at the national and sub-national levels. They also aimed at strengthening the political commitment of these countries to adopting a development planning culture that is based on systematic data and analysis and accurate information for policy formulation and review and to strengthen their commitment to using and disseminating the data for purpose of improved management and enhanced transparency and accountability. A corollary of this recommendation is the importance of quality, timeliness and regularity of data for making, implementing, monitoring and reviewing informed policy choices and for assessing the performance of policies and programmes over time.

More recently the international statistical community adopted the Marrakech Action Plan on Better Data for Results highlighting again the need for mainstreaming strategic planning of statistical systems, preparing for the 2010 census round, and increasing the financial support for capacity building in matters of census and survey statistics, data collection, analysis and dissemination.

The United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) at its 35th session of March 2004 laid down a range of activities for UNSD to ensure the success of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses (PHC). It included the establishment of an Expert Group to set census priorities, development of a well structured website to exchange census data and experiences and to setting up the foundations for the 2010 World Population and Housing Censuses.

In pursuance of this decision by UNSC, the United Nations Symposium on PHC was conducted in New York during 13-14 September 2004. It defined a range of activities relevant to the 2010 World Programme on PHC (WPPHC); identified specific issues and areas warranting further actions based on the experiences and lessons learnt from the 2000 decade; and, set priorities for the Expert Group to Review Critical Issues Relevant

to the Planning of the 2010 Round of PHC and provide inputs for the drafting of a resolution for consideration by the UNSC with respect to the development of the 2010 WPPHC.

In addition, the UNSD and the Regional Commissions undertook a set of activities in response to the decisions of the UNSC at its 35th session. The UNSC, at its 36th session in March 2005, considered the resolution in support of the 2010 WPPHC.

Moreover, the United Nations Expert Group Meeting to Review Critical Issues Relevant to the Planning of the 2010 Round of PHC was convened in New York from 15 to 17 September 2004. It produced a set of recommendations and conclusions pertaining to technical and scientific aspects of emerging issues and topics, such as alternative census designs, core national data sets and updating and revising the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*; it also established terms of reference outlining the role of the Expert Group in relation to the 2010 WPPHC.

UNFPA on its part organized three workshops in the recent past to focus on cost-saving strategies in census and, census data dissemination and use. The workshop on "In-House Capacity Building Workshop on Population Censuses: New Directions and Cost Saving Strategies" was organized by UNFPA at Princeton, New Jersey, from 21-23 October 2002. UNFPA headquarters staff, CST Advisers and a few external experts including from the US Bureau of the Census, Statistics Canada and South Africa, attended the workshop. Two other workshops were held in Pretoria, South Africa ("UNFPA/PARIS21 International Expert Group Meeting on Mechanisms for Ensuring Continuity of 10-Year Population Censuses: Strategies for Reducing Census Costs, 26-29 November 2001" and "UNFPA/PARIS21 International Expert Group Seminar on Population Census Data Dissemination, Use and Advocacy, 10-12 November 2003").

These and other efforts have been devoted over the last decade and more so recently at the international, regional and national levels to strengthen census operations particularly in countries with difficulties and ensure an increased adherence to the principles and use of census as a primary development planning and monitoring tool.

II - What Has Been Happening In the 1990 and 2000 Census Rounds?

In 2004 on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the ICPD, UNFPA carried out a Global Survey and requested governments in both developed and developing countries to provide information on a range of population and development issues including the area of population data and research, the development of consistent, high quality indicators and in the adoption of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Responding to a question on measures taken to strengthen national capacity for population data most countries stated that they had taken some action. Globally the measures adopted were: strengthening the capacity of institutions for data collection, processing, analysis and utilisation (93 countries), supporting the development of national data base management information systems (75 countries), the training of staff on data

base management (61 countries) and the creation of a national statistical service (in 61 countries). While these represent useful developments, the report on the extensiveness and comprehensiveness of action on the data issue, particularly when it came to population and housing censuses was rather inadequate, as a large number of countries underlined problems of data in addressing broad specific population and development issues (Global Survey – 2004, UNFPA).

Recently, UNFPA commissioned a quick survey through the UNFPA country offices using a simple two-page questionnaire to ascertain the circumstances of the 1990 and 2000 rounds of censuses (see questionnaire in annex A). In total 64 questionnaires were filled and received from 36 countries in Africa, 19 in Asia, 3 in America North, 2 in America South, and 4 from Europe. Although the distribution is not representative statistically it provides however a significantly good indication of the census situations, circumstances and difficulties in a number of countries¹.

A quick reading of the questionnaire revealed that a large number of developing countries have been able to conduct censuses during the 2000 round. However many countries, particularly in Africa either could not undertake any census activities, or did not carry out any analysis in a timely and orderly manner or did not make any use of the census results.

The primary reasons mentioned can be summarized as follows:

- a) Increasing costs of censuses as a result of both inflation and sophistication of methodologies but also of growing population numbers;
- b) Increasingly weakening and depleting national budgets and waning international support for census throughout the 1990s. For instance, in four of the six countries which responded to a regional survey by the UNFPA CST team in Addis Ababa, the funding gap was as much as 92% for Eritria, 90% for Sierra Leone, 88% for Liberia, and 52% for Nigeria²
- c) Weak political will and commitment and lack of appreciation of the usefulness of census operations to be carried out once every 10 years;
- d) Census operations are viewed as separate from the national statistical system; most census staff is recruited on a ad hoc basis once every ten years but released right after the census operations are over, causing problems of continuity;
- e) Financing of census in many countries being mostly provided by external sources does little to strengthen the sense of ownership by the country and the sense of usefulness. Countries are not demanding censuses for their own planning purposes; they are willing to carry it out if the funding is made available.

¹ Source: UNFPA Quick Survey on the 2000 Census round, in Background Paper for the international Meeting on Advocacy and Resource Mobilization for the Successful Implementation of the 2010 Census Round, New York, February 24-25, 2005- Nott Rama Rao, UNFPA Consultant.

² Source: UNFPA Country Support Team (CST) of Eastern and Central Africa, Addis Ababa

Censuses become an operation to carry out by default. Hence the little support censuses enjoy from national budgets even when it comes to just paying the cost of the analysis of census data;

- f) Weak coordination of census funding among donors causing delays in initiating operations or upholding sequencing of activities; work plans are delayed or disrupted;
- g) Lack of national institutional capacity in terms of both operations and analysis, which is also a cause of the delays in delivering results or providing poor quality or policy relevant results;
- h) Structural difficulties, barriers and weaknesses throughout the census chain of operations at the administrative, organisational, managerial, technical and advocacy levels;
- i) Weak analysis of the data and poor dissemination of and limited access to the census results;
- j) Cartographic capacity is not maintained through the intercensal period ending up with outdated maps; and,
- k) Civil strives and disturbances of all sorts.

The analysis of the questionnaires revealed that only 24 out of the 36 African countries that filled in the questionnaire carried out a census in the 1990 round and 26 did so in the 2000 round. Angola, DRC, Liberia and Togo did not carry out a census in either round. The main reasons provided for not conducting a census were the lack of funds and civil war or other disturbances.

14 countries in Africa carried out censuses with more than 50% of the budget supported by the national government while at least 5 countries had received more than 70, 80 or even 90% (Lesotho funded up to 98% by UNFPA) for the 2000 round³.

Out of 36 African countries 31 plan to conduct a census in the 2010 round. However, only one country i.e., South Africa indicated that funding would come from the national government. The rest expressed a dire need for a major financial support to conduct the census. It is worth mentioning that in some countries such as Senegal and Cameroon, the government committed more than 50% of the census cost from the national budget. However, more than 15 countries of Africa declared that they would still require more than 50% of the census funding from external sources for this round too.

³ Out of 23 African countries, which received external assistance in the 2000 Round, UNFPA funded 22 countries, among which 2 had received 50% or more of the census cost.

16 countries in Africa missed the 2000 round, 5 countries in Asia i.e., and one in Latin America.

III - Advocacy and Resource Mobilization Initiative

Conscious of the above situation and the need to initiate action at the advocacy and resource mobilization levels, UNFPA in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) organized an international meeting on “Advocacy and Resource Mobilization toward the successful implementation of the 2010 Round (2005-2014) of Population and Housing Censuses (PHCs) in Developing Countries” in New York on February 24 and 25, 2005.

The meeting aimed at identifying appropriate approaches to:

- (i) Determining the persistent problems pertaining to the different stages of the census, e.g., design, operations, analysis, technical deficiencies, and lack of capacity and the range of incompleteness of censuses across a regional and global spectrum and identifying appropriate capacity-building strategies;
- (ii) Ascertaining the reasons for the serious under utilization and poor dissemination of census results at the national and sub-national levels and identifying appropriate strategies to reverse this trend;
- (iii) Ascertaining the availability (or lack) of resources and budgets, both internally and externally, and identifying appropriate strategies to address the resource constraints in a more sustainable manner both with donor and census users’ countries for the next 2010 Round of Censuses; and,
- (iv) Redefining and asserting the value of PHCs in measuring progress toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This objective was suggested in light of the redefined development agenda globally along the MDGs and poverty eradication.

The expected outputs of the meeting were:

- (i) Taking stock of the status of census undertaking in the first year of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing census;
- (ii) Reaching consensus on the appropriate strategies to ensure a successful implementation of the 2010 Round of censuses;
- (iii) Defining appropriate actions to be undertaken by specific institutions.
- (iv) Agreeing on appropriate mechanisms to ensure an adequate follow-up on the implementation of the actions agreed upon by the meeting.

- (v) Agreeing on an Advocacy and resource mobilization plan of Action for the successful implementation of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses.

64 participants attended the meeting. They included representatives from UNSD, UN Population Division, UN Regional Commissions, UN Agencies, Government policy makers from developing countries, policy makers from Government funded agencies, representatives from National Statistics/Census Offices of both developing and developed countries, representatives of Non-Government Organizations, Academics/Census experts, UNFPA staff members from Country Support Teams, UNFPA Representatives, UNFPA staff members from Headquarters and others.

IV - Salient Issues that emerged during the discussions:

A- Importance of PHCs

1. Several participants reiterated the importance of the PHCs: the PHCs in the foreseeable future will continue to be the main source of the socio-demographic data, particularly at the small area level; disaggregated census information disaggregated is useful for local government planning; PHC when linked with good governance, development process and development plan at national, regional and local levels prove to be invaluable.
2. In addition to being vital for national development planning, population censuses can be very useful for the work of the United Nations Population Division and the United Nations system as a whole. They provide inputs for the official United Nations population estimates and projections. Data from population and housing censuses are also used to monitor, review and assess the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the recommendations of other UN conferences and conventions at the national, regional and international levels.
3. Census is crucial not only for evaluating MDGs at the national, sub-national and even small area levels but also to help better manage the programmes for achieving MDGs. In other words census is a powerful tool for estimating MDG indicators at district and lower level. Poverty mapping using census data may be very useful in targeting poor areas and poor people.
4. If population census data could be linked with agriculture census data, there is the possibility of providing some of the MDG indicators for specific groups of farm households. For example, child mortality and poverty indicators could be made available for rice farmers, livestock holdings, and small scale and large holdings.
5. Censuses are used for mapping non-income poverty. This will help ensure the equity efficiency of the poverty reduction programmes.

B- Support to Countries

1. Give priority to countries, which never conducted a PHC in the past. Examples such as Timor Leste, which carried out a census last year for the first time with support from UNFPA, Bhutan and Afghanistan which intend to carry out a census this year, etc.
2. Technical or financial support should be provided for countries in especially difficult conditions, such as post- conflict countries or countries that failed to conduct census in the 2000 Round of PHCs or those which had not completed the whole census process, particularly the data analysis and dissemination.
3. In the past there was weak national commitment by African countries that were deeply involved in the economic structural adjustment programme. Now most of the countries in Sub-Sahara Africa that come under the category of Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC), have difficulties in mobilizing internal resources for PHCs. Actually their priority is to implement Poverty Reduction Strategy as stated in the PRSP which has replaced the Structural Adjustment programmes. These countries still need full support for the 2010 Round of PHC as desired by the Ministers from Senegal and Cameroon who participated in the meeting. Senegal had demonstrated great commitment in the 2002 Census by sharing as much as 77 percent of the census cost. Cameroon is also strongly committed to census. The preparations made for the 2005 Census have become outdated due to time lag and large-scale internal migration in the period. Technical assistance is therefore sought for reviewing the preparations for the census, and also for organization and management of census.
4. The Ethiopian Government proved full commitment to census by funding all census expenditure. New technologies would be used by Ethiopia to improve the 2007 PHC, especially the GIS.
5. Government of Colombia is fully committed to the PHC to be held in 2005. Cost reduction in this census will be achieved by introduction of new technologies and south-south technical cooperation from neighboring countries or regional, sub-regional organization.
6. Financial support for PHC on a priority basis should be provided to the poorest countries belonging to the Baltic region and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIE). Technical support may be required by most of the countries of these regions.
7. World Bank support for the 2010 Round of Population and Housing census will be set within the framework of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics, which emphasizes the role of timely and reliable statistics for results-based management. The main financial instruments that can be used to provide resources for pre- and post-census activities and census operations are: the Development Grant Facility; the Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building; STATCAP, the Bank's lending program for developing statistical systems; and regular Bank instruments, such as loans and credits.

C- Constraints in Resources Mobilization

1. Constraints in mobilizing internal and local resources
 - a. Weakness of the national commitment especially in the HIPC
 - b. Linkages between PHC, and MDGs and national development programmes (global, sub-national and sectoral) are not clearly understood.
 - c. Lack of resources to complete the census process in time due to the crisis or conflict situation
2. Decline in donor commitment in funding censuses in developing countries
 - a. Weakness of the national commitment
 - b. Data needed by key international stakeholders are not often taken into account in the planned PHC products
 - c. Non integration of the census with the larger statistical system of the country
 - d. Lack of initiative and leadership on the part of the national officials concerned
 - e. Difficulty to have access to the former PHCs final results

D- Strategies for Resources Mobilization

1. Local and regional bodies as well as private sector organizations should be viewed as potential sources of funding alongside national government. Mobilizing such resources would be easy where there is a clear demand for census data at the local level. Demands of sub-national users of census data should be given due attention.
2. A mechanism for resource management should be developed to ensure effective resource allocation. National government should approach donors for funding with: i) census project documents, ii) country commitment iii) the comprehensive list of expected products, iv) the description of the process with indication of the interval between enumeration and availability of expected census products, v) the strategy for cost reduction, vi) the strategy to ensure quality assurance of the PHC and vii) the capacity building strategy for sustainability.
3. Allocation of funds for PHC is made in the national budget for the years when census preparation and enumeration, data processing analysis and dissemination are carried out. This causes problems, as huge amount of money has to be earmarked for census in those years. To avoid such “sudden surges” in annual budget, countries may be encouraged to allocate resources for census activities over a longer period of time.

E- Advocacy for Resources Mobilization

1. There is a need for a separate comprehensive manual on utilization of census data for a wide variety of users including not only government but also public and private sector establishments, and local administration authorities. This may be a very useful tool in advocacy.
2. Successful census products in one country can serve as good advocacy materials in several other countries.
3. It is also necessary to make known good practices of previous censuses during the courses of the census process with a view to creating confidence in the donors
4. The purpose of advocacy activities is to gain full support by the political authorities at all levels (Parliament, government at the national and sub national levels) to mobilize internal resources for census. A solid legal basis for census is of primary importance.
5. More systematic advocacy approach for resources mobilization is known to give good results when it is well applied. Advocacy documents for resources mobilization had been elaborated at the beginning of the PHC process in many countries in Africa: Cote d'Ivoire (1998), Benin (2002), Madagascar (2004). For Other countries it was a post enumeration advocacy document for the complementary resources to achieve PHC operation: Senegal (2002), Central Africa Republic (2004).

F- Promotion of Utilization

1. The National Bureau of the Census should function on a continuous basis with a view to providing continuity to census tasks during the intercensal period. During this period the bureau can undertake analytical and methodological studies including studies on improvement of census process to make it cost-effective. This arrangement, which includes the data users service center, will help in maintaining an ongoing dialogue with census users. This should lead to increased utilization of census products and planning for the next census.
2. The census data could be used in combination with other administrative routine data available in line ministries or data from intercensal surveys, to provide indicators for sectoral programmes.
3. A pro-active dissemination strategy is very essential. Collaboration with Universities and Research Institutions should be undertaken to strengthen national capacity in analysis of data
4. Apart from dissemination efforts, interpreting the census data to different target groups at national and sub-national levels through workshops is essential for

better utilization of census data. National Statistical Offices and Line Ministries should play an important role in this.

5. A good strategy for utilization and dissemination of census data should be part of the initial planning process, as this will affect the design of the questionnaire and have resource implications. Identifying and consulting key users in country at the very beginning of census operation process should therefore be an established part of census methodology.
6. The African Census Analysis Project (ACAP) has developed a platform for making African census data available and accessible to scholars, international agencies and researchers. This will greatly help development planners and policy makers.

G- New Technologies

1. The use of new technologies like ICR, OCR, OMR and GIS (Including aerial photography, GPS, and satellite imagery) had not been uniformly successful in all countries. In some countries they had caused delays, increased costs and compromised quality. The new technologies should be introduced only if the infrastructure is in place and technical know how is available in the country concerned. An important lesson learned from 2000 round of PHC is that technology is not an automatic substitute for quality.
2. It is extremely important that census data are increasingly made available through user-friendly electronic media. This would help enlarge the user groups at national, regional and local levels, and also facilitate easy access to data by planners of local bodies.
3. Adoption of GIS to provide a computer-based design of enumeration areas and significant automation of map production tasks can lead to considerable cost saving. Countries should be encouraged to create an integrated database containing population and cartography databases.
4. With new technologies and proper planning the time lag between enumeration and release of results could be minimized, say about 18 months. The usage of IMR technology in data processing in the 1998 Census of Pakistan reduced the time lag in release of census results. In Thailand by using IT results of the last census were released and disseminated in about 18 months' time from the enumeration. This was a very good improvement compared to previous censuses. It is good to remember that data delayed is data denied. Before the enumeration, there should be a comprehensive analysis and dissemination plan designed in consultation with users of census data.
5. Each country has to consider the most suitable approach taking into account it's resources and circumstances. The UNFPA is considering conducting a study

examining appropriate census models for different country groups based on key parameters such as country size, budget, access to technology, human capital, and labor costs.

H- Knowledge Sharing on Regional Approach

1. The CARICOM region has had a rich history of conducting PHC on a regionally coordinated basis. The joint activities included: i) preliminary preparation, ii) training of census personnel, iii) producing quick and reliable results from the census and, iv), census evaluation and analysis. The challenge for the 2010 round in this region is to improve the planning and management of the total process; to strengthen regional capacity in conducting good quality censuses; and, to take advantage of the new technologies in the census process.
2. The MERCOSUR region has achieved success of regional cooperation in census taking. Lessons learned from this experience should be shared with other regions in order to increase effectiveness and efficiency in the gathering of population and housing information, as well as for reducing costs, improving data processing, and reducing time lag between data collection and dissemination.
3. The census core questions have been standardized in the SADC and MERCOSUR regions, which is a great step forward in south-south cooperation. This marks the prelude to achieving internationally agreed standards and methods, which is another objective of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses.
4. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community prefers a regional approach in census taking to achieve cost-effectiveness, maximum impact and sustainability (sustaining regional, rather than creating an ad hoc national capacity in different countries).

I. Capacity Building

1. Despite training programmes conducted for more than two decades with the help of UNFPA funding there is still lack of capacity in census taking and advocacy skills in several counties. This is due to large-scale turn over or retirement of trained staff. Conducting in-house training for more staff by trained senior staff should institutionalize capacity building. In other words there should be capitalization of experiences, which could be achieved by documentation of previous experience and lessons learned.
2. In spite of integration of analysis and dissemination programmes with the main census programmes in the last decade there are still a few countries which do not completely analyze and disseminate census products for want of required funds and lack of skilled staff.

3. National Statistical/Censuses Offices do not have sufficient and skilled staff to implement the new approach due to:
 - a. Large turn over of the qualified staff
 - b. Weakness of advocacy skills of the census Office
 - c. Weak capacity to analyze census data
4. Capacity building through on the job training and south–south cooperation proved to be cost–effective.
5. The USAID, through International Programme Center (IPC) of US Bureau of the census will continue to provide technical assistance to countries on request. The assistance mainly consists of training workshop, supply of software for data processing and for analysis free of cost. As a follow up of the training workshops US Bureau experts provide on the job training to the national staff.

J- Census Management Aspects

1. Census has to be cost-effective. Pre-census mapping, enumeration fieldwork, data processing, analysis and dissemination constitute the bulk of census cost. With the help of new technologies attempts may be made to reduce each of these costs. However any cost reducing measure should not reduce the quality of census data.
2. In Nigeria a cost saving and expenditure monitoring strategy has been conceived for the 2005 census to ensure that cost effectiveness is sustained throughout the stages of census taking and that the census work plan and budget are adhered to.
3. The introduction of ICR (Intelligent Character Trading) technology in data capture of the 2001 Census of India had resulted in an estimated saving of about US \$ 140 million.
4. Budget for all operations should be properly planned and provided even at the beginning of the census operations. This would help in completing all tasks as scheduled in the work plan.
5. Lessons learned from the experiences of some countries (Benin, Cap Verde, and Sultanate of Oman) about early commencement of census preparations and adoption of the data analysis plan as soon as the draft questionnaire is available, increases the cost effectiveness and the cost-benefit of the census, and reduces significantly the time-lag between enumeration and availability of final census products.

K- Other Aspects

1. The alternative approaches to traditional censuses were considered. Most of the developing countries do not have a viable alternative to the censuses like

administrative registers. Hence alternative approaches to the PHC in the developing countries may not be feasible as at the present time.

2. The contents and scope of the 2010 Round of censuses were considered. It was generally agreed that collection of data on international migration especially out-migration might pose a challenge in a census.
3. As regards measuring maternal mortality from a census, some countries had included questions on this topic during the 2000 round of censuses. The results of this approach need to be evaluated and applied in future censuses if found reliable.
4. Whenever PHC is combined with other censuses (e.g. Establishment census or economic census) to save cost, care should be taken to ensure that quality of PHC is not allowed to suffer due to divided attention given by enumerators or delay in completing the census tasks because of the additional work load to enumerators.

V - PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

The discussions led to a set of action points, which are given below:

UNSD and UNFPA will team up to prepare a multi pronged advocacy note. The note will be used for the purpose of mobilizing resources as per the census experience and needs of countries concerned. The note will take into account areas for advocacy and promoting interest in censuses to achieve the following objectives:

1. Sensitizing key national stakeholders like the Government, Parliament, local government authorities and private sector on the importance of the PHC at the national and sub-national levels in order to mobilize resources.
2. Promoting a more important visibility for National Statistical/Census Offices to play a pro-active role in data dissemination strategy.
3. Development of a guidance note on different uses of census data.
4. Strengthening data users service centers as part of the national statistical framework and involving stakeholders in the census operations early in the process.
5. Census data could be used to advantage in combination with administrative and survey data available to provide indicators and information for development programmes including MDGs; acknowledging that while census is absolutely necessary for the achievement of the MDGs it may not be sufficient.
6. Document and share lessons learned on using new technology.

7. Strengthen exchange of experience at the regional level and facilitate transfer of know how.
8. Promote South/South cooperation for conducting censuses on a regionally coordinated basis. ECOWAS and CEEMAC where countries were experiencing resource gaps, should review their approach for 2010 round by applying good lessons learned from CARICOM, MERCOSUR and SADC. This would help in saving time in making budget proposals and also in reducing costs.
9. Strengthen national capacity in census advocacy for resource mobilization.

Concluding remarks

The 2010 round of censuses poses a tremendous amount of challenges of different orders and magnitudes and depending on the different country contexts. A good number of countries may still not be able to carry out a census in this round. The challenges which have been detailed above range from the lack of political will, limited interest in and appreciation for the critical importance of the census for the country, the lack of individual and institutional capacity, limited and constraining budgets and human made or nature made disruptions of all sorts.

There are however, a number of opportunities that could be capitalized on to ensure a more successful round. These opportunities are represented in the momentum, which is gathering speed and importance with the MDG (this year being the 5-year review of the Millennium Declaration), redefining development as poverty reduction and the need to target the poor and marginalized groups which requires statistical and planning instruments and tools to track them and monitor the policy and programmes that target them. Other opportunities also lie in the increased interest on the part of many countries to move beyond the structural adjustment programme and to devote more attention to the social sector, in the lessons learned from shared experiences in census operations and in the increased interest in integrating census operations within the broader statistical framework which would ensure continuity and sustainability of census staff and cadre.

Advocacy efforts need to reach out to both implementing and donor partners to highlight the critical importance of the census and ensure that political will, institutional support, necessary skills and required resources are available to make this round more successful than all previous ones.

UNFPA is committed to the above objectives and stands ready globally, through its country offices and programmes and its regional technical teams throughout continents to work closely with partner countries and to team up with all partners concerned within the UN system and outside to achieving this goal.