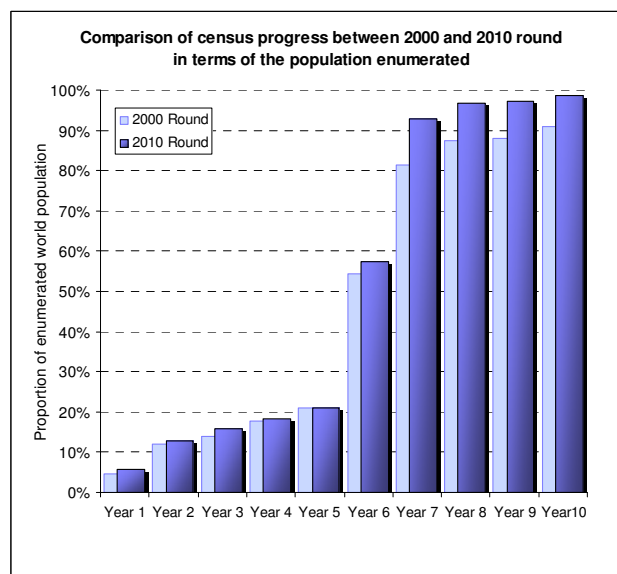
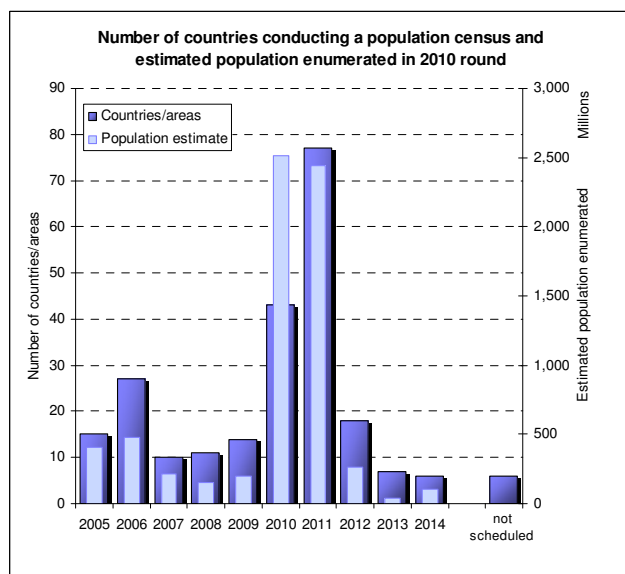


Situation of the 2010 round of Population and Housing Censuses

- The 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses was approved by the Statistical Commission at its 36th session in 2005 and adopted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in resolution A/2005/13. The 2010 World Programme aims at ensuring that each Member State conducts a population and housing census at least once during the 2010 census round which spans the period from 2005 to 2014.
- Since the beginning of the round in 2005, 134 countries or areas have undertaken a census, enumerating around 5.5 billion people which represent 79% of the population of the world¹. This year, 2011, is the peak of the 2010 round with 77 countries conducting censuses, enumerating around 2.4 billion people (35% of the world population). On the other hand, 2010 marked the year with the most people enumerated – 2.5 billion people - in 43 countries or areas. (see the graph)
- By the end of the round in 2014, it is expected that almost 99% of the population of the world will be enumerated in 228 countries or areas. Only 6 countries or areas have not yet formally planned a census (Equatorial Guinea, Lebanon, Myanmar, Somalia, Uzbekistan and Western Sahara). This means a significant improvement over the 2000 round, when 27 countries did not conduct a census.



¹ As of 1 April 2011.

New innovations

- The main innovations of the 2010 round are in terms of methods used to obtain the data and also use of technology. A recent UNSD survey on census methodologies for 2010 round of censuses shows that while the majority of countries or areas are still using the traditional census as the source for data on the total population count, an increasing number are producing census data with new approaches mainly using registers either alone or in combination with other data collection mechanisms. Some countries are using continuous sample surveys to produce data that have usually been collected through traditional censuses.
- On the technological side, the 2010 round witnesses a substantial number of countries that have adopted new technologies or more innovatively used existing technologies to improve the completeness, accuracy, timeliness, accessibility and over all quality of census results. The use of new technologies has also drastically shortened the time it takes between data collection and dissemination. For example, Brazil, Oman and India were able to release their provisional census results in about a month.
- In the 2010 census round, a number of countries or areas offer the option for self enumeration via the Internet while some have adopted computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI). More than 30 countries or areas are providing an option for Internet-based self-enumeration. Also, at least 13 countries or areas are using the PDA to collect data in the 2010 round of censuses.
- New technologies also provide opportunities to improve the management of field operations. In the current round of census, call centers and mobile telephone technology are used to build an integrated field communication system. In this system, the key issue is the timely flow of information among field staff and between them and the other levels of the census structure. Examples are the USA, the Philippines, Indonesia and Oman.
- During the 2000 round of censuses, many countries adopted scanning for data capture but with a lot of failures due to lack of adequate advance planning and testing. In the current round, further refinements in the scanning technology, coupled with lessons learned from the experience of the 2000 round have made use of optical data capture technology the most viable option for data processing for many countries, particularly those which have large populations such as China, India, and Indonesia
- There is increased use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in different phases of the census operation, and also in combination with other geo-located sources such as handheld devices and mobile telephones. Recent decades have witnessed the dissemination of data through interactive online databases and GIS web-based mapping tools. In the 2010 round of censuses, around 80 countries plan to disseminate census data with GIS web-based mapping tools.

Challenges

- Many countries in the world still face difficulties to undertake a census, often resulting in cancelling or postponement of census dates. Political and social instability, lack of financial resources, shortage

of skilled staff are among the main issues faced by the NSOs. Since 2005 several countries have rescheduled their censuses at least once. For example, as of 2008, 64 censuses were expected to be conducted in 2010. The actual number of countries or areas that conducted a census in 2010 dropped to 43 and the rest were postponed mainly to 2011.

- Rapidly changing technology has created an increasing number of technological options for census taking. However, along with the relative advantages of speed and accuracy, adoption of new methodologies and technologies exposes data collection and processing systems to new problems and different sources and types of error.
- Privacy concerns have hampered census taking in some countries in the 2010 round. Privacy and governmental intrusion concerns seem to have eroded the political commitment in some countries for the indispensability of the census as a means for evidence-based policy-making. It is in part because of concerns of low participation of the general public in the census operation that some countries are adopting alternative methods to compiling census data.

UNSD and the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses

- For over six decades, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) has played a key role in supporting national census taking. UNSD, Secretariat to the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, works closely with countries and other relevant organizations to ensure successful implementation of the Programme.
- Major activities of UNSD in support of the 2010 World Programme include: (i) development of census methodological guidelines (UNSD has released 6 publications including *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2.*); (ii) assisting countries in improving their statistical capacity in census taking (UNSD has trained over 1000 participants from 140 countries in 33 workshops since 2006); and (iii) facilitating exchange of national experience. Exchange of national experience and know-how significantly contributes to the quality and efficiency of census operations. In this connection, a major focus of the Programme is on regional cooperation, including the fostering of South-to-South cooperation.
- The 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme website of the UNSD (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/census2010.htm>) provides information on census related activities across the world, and the Census Knowledge Base, which serves as a repository of census methodology guidelines and documents pertaining to country good practices in census-taking. To date, the Census Knowledge Base contains more than 400 documents.