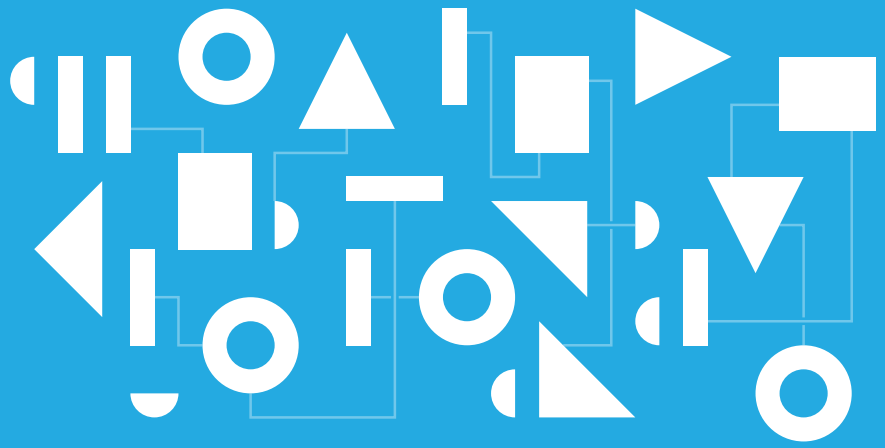

Methodological Guidelines for the Gender Analysis of National Population and Housing Census Data

Technical Division of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
Population and Development Branch
Gender, Human Rights and Culture Branch

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Foreword

A national Population and Housing Census has the enormous advantage of enumerating every single household and individual in a country, thereby making it possible to provide more robust and disaggregated detail on particular geographic areas and social groups than almost any other data source.

One of the main pillars of UNFPA's technical support for national Population and Housing Censuses is to make certain that the best possible use is made of the information collected to inform policy and programming; particularly in areas such as sexual and reproductive health and rights, adolescents and youth, population dynamics and gender. In the case of gender, many National Statistical Offices (NSOs) have sought UNFPA's support in the analysis and production of special gender monographs based on their census data. While developing these monographs, social scientists have often been confronted with two challenges. One is that the statistical analysis of gender issues (using any data source), is often limited to an over-simplified analysis of indicators that document differences by sex. While this is a necessary step in a more comprehensive gender analysis, it is by no means sufficient. True gender analysis needs to assess, analyze and reveal the processes of differential social roles, variance in

social treatment and outright discrimination that explain the observed results.

The second challenge is that census data only address a limited number of concerns that are of interest to gender analysis. Issues such as division of household tasks, access to services, fertility preferences or domestic violence are generally beyond the scope of what can be asked for in a census.

The Needs Assessment Conferences for Census Analysis (NACCA), which the Population and Development Branch of UNFPA's Technical Division organized between 2009 and 2011 in Dakar, Senegal, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic and Bali, Indonesia, identified the need for a better orientation of NSOs in the production of census gender monographs. More specifically, suggestions were made to take better advantage of the unique opportunities offered by the census and – to the extent possible – overcome the limitations described above. In the process of identifying best practices and proposing novel approaches to the best use of census data for this purpose, UNFPA collaborated up with UN Women, the UN Statistics Division and UNICEF. This manual is the result of three years of work which benefited from

the input of a large number of consultants and readers. It complements the more general manual on gender statistics recently launched by the UN Statistics Division (United Nations, 2013), reviews a variety of data sources, and the manual recently published by the Asia and Pacific Regional Office (UNFPA, 2013), which covers all aspects of the census process in the specific context of Southern Asia.

It is anticipated that the methodological guidance provided in this manual will offer National Statistical Offices and those concerned with gender issues to make increasingly effective use of the data from Population and Housing Censuses. More importantly, based on sound systematic analysis, we hope that national authorities are in a better position to celebrate success where it has been measurably achieved, and squarely address inequality and discrimination wherever it remains.

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Gayle Nelson was responsible for the contributions of the Gender, Culture and Human Rights Branch. Nancy Stiegler and later Tina Tordjman-Nebe took care of the coordination of the team of consultants which consisted of Ana Lúcia Cunha, Jean-Michel Durr, Catherine Raissigiuer and Loretta Bass. Frank Eelens joined the team later, to develop some further examples of multi-variate analysis.

Eduard Jongstra from UNFPA contributed to Chapter 4. Jennifer Olmsted and Sabrina Juran from UNFPA wrote

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