

# Evaluation of UNFPA support to population and housing census data to inform decision-making and policy formulation 2005-2014



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# Evaluation of UNFPA support to population and housing census data to inform decision-making and policy formulation (2005-2014)

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## Foreword

*As underscored by the International Convention on Population and Development Programme for Action (1994), valid, reliable, timely, culturally relevant and internationally comparable data are critical for the development and implementation of evidence based policies. Disaggregated data in particular is central to ensuring that development policies and programmes address inequality within and between communities and countries and advance a rights-based, equitable, and sustainable development. Indeed, the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize the importance of disaggregated data, calling for disaggregation (by income, gender, age, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts) to monitor progress in the implementation of the goals and ensure that “no one is left behind”.*

Within this context, I am pleased to present the independent evaluation of UNFPA support to population and housing census data to inform decision-making and policy formulation (2005-2014). In UNFPA, this evaluation is considered to be ground breaking. It is the first independent thematic evaluation of UNFPA support to census globally. This is perhaps surprising, noting that UNFPA has been providing significant support to census since the early 1970s.

The evaluation was conducted by the UNFPA independent Evaluation Office together with a diverse, multidisciplinary team of independent evaluators and thematic experts from ICON Institut Public Sector consultants.

The core evaluation team was comprised of members of the UNFPA Evaluation Office - Alexandra Chambel, who served as the evaluation manager and team coordinator and Natalie Raaber, who provided research support – together with experts from ICON Institut, including Jordi del Bas, lead methodology evaluator, Jean Michel Durr, senior census expert and Christophe Dietrich, survey expert. Fabrice Hénard and Anne Gillies, evaluation experts, Frank Eelens and Isabelle De Pourbaix, census experts also contributed to the case studies and data collection at country and regional levels. Maaria Seppanen, a human rights and gender expert provided inputs to the pilot case study in Peru. National consultants made invaluable contributions to the country case studies, including Alicia Gonzalez (Peru), Ammar Al-Yazji (Palestine), Jamal Hassan (Palestine), Margaret Ndwiga (Kenya), Nyo Nyo Soe (Myanmar) and Isselkou Taleb (Mauritania). Hicham Daoudi from the Evaluation Office, undertook the internal review of the draft evaluation report.

This evaluation is the first of three thematic evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office under the 2014 - 2015 transitional budgeted evaluation plan since revision of the UNFPA Evaluation Policy in 2013. In line with the policy the evaluation aims to meet both accountability and learning needs. It also seeks to provide evidence of good practice.

Methodologically, the evaluation draws on a theory of change approach, systematically reconstructing and testing the theory of change underpinning UNFPA support to census. The evaluation includes case studies from all regions in which UNFPA works: six in country case studies and seven extended desk reviews were conducted. The case studies provide a rich source of data allowing for an in-depth exploration of the contribution of UNFPA to the 2010 census round. Additional sources of data include surveys, semi structured individual and group interviews and document review. The evaluation utilises contribution analysis, context analysis and comparative analysis to produce concrete findings and conclusions. To ensure reliability and validity, evidence sources were well-triangulated and internal and external validation mechanisms were applied. I am confident that the study presents a solid and credible evidence base.

Sustained, multi-stakeholder engagement, at country, regional and global levels, was ensured throughout the evaluation, to improve the reliability, relevance and use of the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations. An evaluation reference group, with balanced geographic representation, provided substantive technical inputs at key points and ensured transparency throughout the evaluation process. The evaluation engaged with a variety of country level stakeholders, as well, including staff in UNFPA country offices, other UN agencies, donors, civil society, and government. On the latter, engagement with national statistical offices occurred throughout the process, via survey participation, interviews, and briefing sessions, including at the 2015 and 2016 UN Statistical Commission. The evaluation's findings and recommendations were also shared during the 2016 Commission on Population and Development, to facilitate the engagement of member states.

The evaluation surfaced multiple findings related to census data availability, quality, accessibility, and use for policy-making. Findings emphasised the centrality of census to the statistical ecosystem: census is the main source of comprehensive demographic data and is linked to and often provides the sampling frame for other surveys. The evaluation reveals the preeminent focus of the 2010 census round on enhancing the production of census data, with rather less attention to data use in policy-making. This relates not only to the work of UNFPA, but also to programme countries who invest significant resources in census production, national partners who use census data, and to funding partners.

The evaluation underscored the critical importance of the role of UNFPA in supporting census within the UN system and with national statistical offices. During the 2010 census round an expansion in census coverage occurred: seven more programme countries conducted a census during the 2010 round than during the 2000 round, with the proportion of the population enumerated increasing in certain regions (Africa). The evaluation found UNFPA to have contributed considerably to this progress: the successful conduct of censuses in Sudan and South-Sudan are particularly good examples. The UNFPA contribution proved to be essential to the successful conduct of censuses in many countries: advocating for the census and fomenting political will, supporting the generation of financial resources for census, and providing technical assistance and advice.

Not surprisingly, the evaluation identified a number of areas for attention, including particularly on support to the use of data, and identified opportunities to build on good practice during the 2020 census round and more widely in terms of the data for development agenda. The evaluation team worked hard to ensure that recommendations were well framed and operationally appropriate, with excellent engagement by members of the evaluation reference group.

The evaluation contributed to the mid-term review of the 2014 - 2017 UNFPA strategic plan and informs the UNFPA strategy for support of the 2020 census round. I am pleased to note that there is already clear evidence of UNFPA management actively responding to and utilising the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations at global, regional and country level. Within the UN system more broadly, the evaluation's findings are feeding into the first independent system wide evaluation of the contribution of the United Nations development system to strengthening national statistical capacity.

The evaluation is the result of a fruitful collaboration among many individuals and institutions. The evaluation would not have been possible without the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders at country, regional and global levels. UNFPA staff members at headquarters and regional and country offices generously shared their time, energy and ideas throughout the evaluation process. The Evaluation Office gratefully acknowledges the knowledge provided by representatives of other United Nations agencies, partner governments, national and development partners, and other key stakeholders, informants and experts who provided critical information through surveys and interviews.

The case studies would not have been possible without the support, advice, and guidance of the respective country representatives and assistant representatives, population and development officers, and others. With deepest gratitude to the following individuals:

- **Peru**, the pilot country, Elena Zuniga, the country representative, and Walter Mendoza
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- **Mauritania**, Seynath Aidara, the assistant representative, and Pierre Klissou, and Brahim Vall Ould Mohamed Lemine
- **Myanmar**, Janet Jackson, the country representative, and Fredrick Okwayo and Petra Righetti
- **Palestine**, Anders Thomsen, the country representative, Ziad Yaish, Rasha Abu Shanab and Sana Asi
- **Tajikistan**, Karl Kulassa, the former country representative, and Aziza Hamidova and Alisher Ashurov.

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I also thank members of the UNFPA Executive Committee for their engagement throughout the evaluation exercise.

Special acknowledgement to Keiko Osaki-Tomita, Chief, Demographic and Social Statistics Branch and her team, at the UN Statistical Division, for their committed engagement and open invitation to share information on and results of the evaluation to the 2015 and 2016 Statistical Commissions.

On behalf of UNFPA, I thank the donors that have supported and contributed to census and for their engagement in the evaluation process.

The evaluation surfaced challenges, opportunities, lessons learned and recommendations to more effectively support the conduct of census and I hope it will be useful to UNFPA, the Executive Board, and more widely.

I believe that the evaluation contributes to the body of evidence that reaffirms the significance of reliable data for decision-making, underscores the importance of census as a global public good, and highlights the need to intensify efforts to strengthen statistical capacities in developing countries.

Support to census ought to be a central feature in our continued effort to advance evidence based policy-making. As we scale up efforts in support of full implementation of the ICPD Programme for Action and re-double our commitment to sustainable development through the implementation of Agenda 2030 quality, disaggregated, accessible data have never been more vital in ensuring that no one is left behind.



Andrea Cook

Director, UNFPA Evaluation Office

## Acronyms

CELADE	Population Division of ECLAC
CSO	Civil society organization
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
INEI	Institute of Statistics of Peru
IWGC	Interdivisional Working Group on Census
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSO	National Statistical Office
PCBS	Palestine Bureau of Statistics
SCI	Statistical Capacity Indicator
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIC	Special Initiative on Census
SRO	Subregional Office
UN-Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
WHO	World Health Organization

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## Structure of the evaluation report

This evaluation report is divided into five chapters.

**Chapter 1**, the introduction, presents the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, the scope and the methodology.

**Chapter 2** describes the context, including the background to the worldwide 2010 census round and the programmatic UNFPA response during the period.

**Chapter 3** presents the evaluation findings and analysis and provides answers to the seven questions in the evaluation matrix, addressing the five evaluation criteria: relevance (including alignment), efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and added value. The answers to the evaluation questions cover three levels of analysis: national, regional and global.

**Chapter 4** features the conclusions (which draw on the findings in the previous chapter), offering an aggregate assessment by extracting strategic and operational considerations on cross-cutting, recurrent and priority aspects. Chapter 4 also presents the recommendations, which, together with the conclusions, focus on issues that may inform UNFPA support to the 2020 census round and the forthcoming midterm review of the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan.

The **annexes**, presented in separate volumes, include the terms of reference of the evaluation; the minutes of the evaluation reference group meetings; a list of people interviewed and documents consulted; the financial analysis of the Atlas portfolio of interventions in the 2010 round (as well as the complete database); the evaluation matrix; the interview guides and the logbook template; and the surveys' methodology, forms, complete results and scores for all countries covered on statistical capacity and government effectiveness.

# Executive Summary

## Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess UNFPA support to strengthening national capacity for the production and dissemination of disaggregated, quality data and its use in evidence-based decision-making and policy formulation over the period of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census (the “2010 census round”).

This thematic worldwide evaluation includes all countries in which UNFPA provided support to census, covering the period from 2005 to 2014. The evaluation analysis addresses the country, regional and global levels.

The evaluation results will be used as an input to inform the midterm review of the UNFPA 2014–2017 Strategic Plan, UNFPA support to the 2020 census round and the post-2015 development agenda on data for development.

## UNFPA support to census

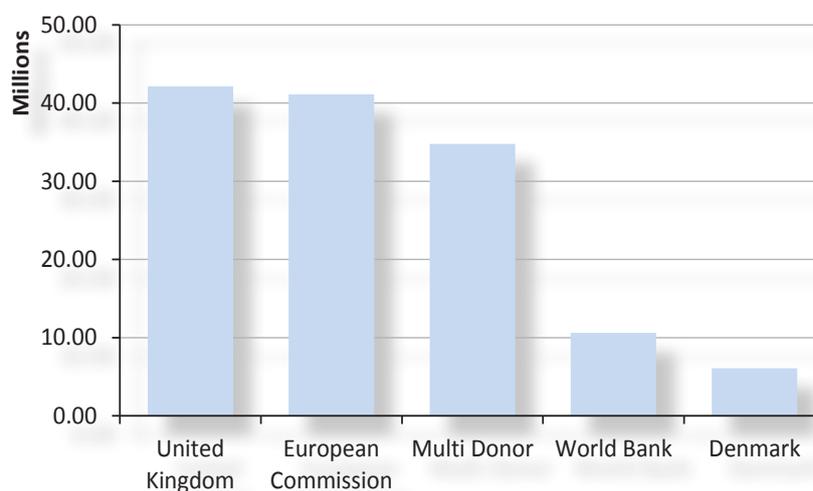
The UNFPA role within the United Nations system is to address population and development issues, with an emphasis on reproductive health and gender equality, within the context of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action, the Millennium Development Goals and now, the Sustainable Development Goals.

Census support is a key component of UNFPA population and development interventions. In collaboration with other United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations Statistics Division, UNFPA supports population and housing censuses by strengthening processes and enhancing national capacity to generate, disseminate, analyse and use statistical data.

During the 2010 census round (2005 to 2014), UNFPA provided support to more than 130 countries through, *inter alia*, policy dialogue and advice, advocacy, technical assistance, capacity development, procurement of equipment or services, financial support, coordination and management of financial resources for the census (on behalf of partner governments) and facilitating South-South cooperation.

In total, UNFPA spent **301.7 million** United States dollars (of which 35 per cent originated from UNFPA core resources, while 65 per cent were provided by donors) on support to census during the period under evaluation. Among donors, the United Kingdom and the European Commission contributed the largest amount. Most expenditures (core and non-core funds) in support to census were spent at the country level (95 per cent); 3 per cent were spent at the regional level and 2 per cent at the global level.

### Top 5 donors (non-core resources) to the 2010 census round



## The evaluation process

The evaluation process consisted of five phases:



## Evaluation approach

The evaluation followed a mixed-method, multiple-level analysis and utilization-focused approach. Other methodology features included a focus on the output and outcome levels, an approach to qualitative causal analysis based on contribution rather than attribution and the use of triangulation to guarantee the reliability and robustness of the findings.

The evaluation was shaped around seven evaluation questions, which guided data collection, data analysis and report writing, and covered five evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and added value). The questions were grounded on the theory of change, a reconstruction of how the desired changes sought by UNFPA support to the 2010 census round were expected to happen. A series of assumptions and indicators were developed to frame the questions.

## Evaluation components

The evaluation had six components and each component was a line of evidence that was used to inform the three levels of analysis - country, regional and global - when addressing evaluation questions. The components were:

<b>Country case studies</b>	Kenya, Mauritania, Myanmar, Palestine, Peru and Tajikistan, provided in-depth analysis of specific UNFPA-support settings. Each case study involved a two-week field visit and a stand-alone country case study report.
<b>Country extended desk reviews</b>	Reviews were conducted in seven countries - Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Cameroon, Indonesia, Iraq and Rwanda, featuring specific experiences on the census operation or particular modes of UNFPA support. When coupled with in-country case studies, the analysis of these countries offered a more complete picture of the distinct types of UNFPA interventions.
<b>Country office survey</b>	The survey addressed to UNFPA country offices, focused on technical assistance, soft-aid and added value.
<b>National Statistical Office survey</b>	The survey polled respondents on technical assistance, capacity development and added value.
<b>Regional interviews and desk study</b>	The regional study encompassed in-depth semi-structured interviews with regionally based organizations and with staff of the UNFPA regional offices. It also included a study of documentation with a regional scope.
<b>Global interviews and desk study</b>	The global study involved the analysis of relevant documentation and in-depth semi-structured interviews combined with group interviews with a range of global census players.

## Methods for data collection

Data collection methods included: document and literature reviews; interviews with key informants (both face-to-face and remotely conducted); structured grouped interviews; surveys of National Statistical Offices (NSOs); surveys of UNFPA country offices; direct observation in several of the visited countries; and Internet-based searches. In total, the evaluation team interviewed 795 people through individual and group interviews.

## Methods for data analysis

Data analysis methodology featured both qualitative and quantitative components and included: contribution analysis (applied through the theory of change approach); content analysis (applied through an online evaluative database centralizing and codifying the information from interviews and documents); comparative and aggregate analysis (done using country, regional and global summary evidence tables); descriptive statistics (sample frequencies, contingency tables) and goodness of fit tests (applied to the results of the surveys).

## Reliability and validity

The evaluation team used triangulation to ensure the reliability and credibility of findings. Triangulation included cross-checking different sources of information within and across evaluation components, cross-checking findings and evidence from different evaluation components and comparing the results of different data collection methods in country case studies and extended desk reviews. The evaluation team applied validation mechanisms in order to ensure internal and external validity. Internal validation was accomplished through two evaluation team workshops. External validation was accomplished through briefing and debriefing meetings at global and country level with country offices and NSOs.

Institutions	Number of people interviewed
UNFPA (Headquarters, regional offices, country offices)	144
National statistical offices	164
United Nations agencies and development partners	90
Subnational authorities	68
Government and other public bodies	174
Media/civil society organizations/academia	142
Other	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>795</b>

## Conclusions

**Conclusion 1: UNFPA support has been a key contributor to the 2010 census round; the support provided has been largely positive.**

UNFPA support to census made significant contributions to enhancing NSO capacities to produce and make available census data in line with international standards. UNFPA support featured strong alignment with government priorities and national and regional stakeholder needs for data by playing an outstanding role in creating an enabling environment for census conduct.

In the majority of countries analysed in depth, there was a perception that without UNFPA support, the census would not have taken place. Support was characterized by efficient management of funds and strong adaptability, resulting in a timely census, even in the most challenging circumstances. Strategic networking and the use of partnerships, particularly at the country level, contributed to smooth implementation and resource optimization. UNFPA support was essential to including gender equality considerations throughout the census process and, on the whole, was sensitive to and effective in including human rights considerations.

**Conclusion 2: During the 2010 census round, UNFPA was strategically positioned as a census player worldwide. Despite this, support to census ranks rather modestly among UNFPA global strategic priorities and is not fully reflected in the current strategic plan.**

UNFPA is widely recognized as a key player in population and housing censuses worldwide. At the country level, support to census is often seen as a flagship of UNFPA support. Four elements explain this solid positioning: legitimacy among census-related development partners; being the only United Nations organization with long-established, in-house census capacity on the ground; recognition of its distinctive convening role in the census process; and being perceived as a guarantor of the census operation.

In contrast, support provided to the 2010 census round was rather diffuse, with the discontinuation of the UNFPA Special Initiative on Census prior to the end of the round. Despite the importance of census to advancing Outcome Four (integration of evidence-based analysis on population dynamics and their links to sustainable development) of the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan the Plan does not capture the full range of census support activities undertaken by UNFPA or accurately reflect the weight census holds at the country level. The wealth of experience and learning generated by UNFPA support has not yet been systematically captured for learning.

**Conclusion 3: There are concerns among key stakeholders regarding UNFPA internal expertise and human resources on census. UNFPA institutional positioning vis-à-vis census is strongly associated with the expertise of its staff, yet there are human resource imbalances within UNFPA.**

Census knowledge and expertise of UNFPA staff is a key asset, explaining, *inter alia*, donor trust in UNFPA, the well-received role of the organization as a convener and UNFPA contribution to developing national capacity for census data production and availability. Despite this, internal expertise was substantially depleted throughout the 2010 census round. The dismantling of the Country Technical Services Teams resulted in unexpectedly inadequate expertise to fulfil the regional mandate for census support. Further, staff with census expertise were not replenished at headquarters once the Special Initiative on Census ended. In addition, the lack of an organized and systematized corporate backstopping system has resulted in census support relying mostly on individual capacity rather than on an institutionalized and systematic approach. This is currently occurring in a context with indications that in-country population and development officers lack adequate capacity in statistics, demography and expertise on census and where expertise gaps at the country level are rarely addressed with human resources from the regional or headquarters levels.

**Conclusion 4: The 2010 census round primarily focused on enhancing the production of census-related data, placing disproportionately less attention on data dissemination, analysis and use in policymaking. However, data dissemination and use is central to both the current UNFPA strategic plan and in the International Conference on Population and Development.**

UNFPA did not maximize the possibilities that more effective dissemination tools could have offered in fostering the use of data (e.g. innovative tools for dissemination were not promoted, lack of innovation in the structure and format of thematic reports and the development of standard supply-based dissemination plans without examination of data users' specific needs). Similarly, support to the use of census-related data seldom went beyond user-producer workshops and did not rely on a long-term strategy to develop the analytical capacities of statistical offices, ministries or civil society. A number of reasons explain this situation: a rather narrow understanding of the scope of the census exercise (a focus on enumeration); UNFPA support to the 2010 census may have assumed that, once made available, the data generated would automatically be analysed and used for policy development (which has proven not to be the case); NSOs prioritizing data production over dissemination and use; and UNFPA not pushing enough for dissemination strategies. Capacity development activities were conducted but had limited scope and were insufficient to generate the desired changes.

**Conclusion 5: There are significant differences between the intended (according to the theory of change) and the actual interventions undertaken to support census. The actual interventions had a limited focus on the use of data for evidence-based policy, resulting in lower than expected contributions to the intended outcomes. Obstacles in adopting the UNFPA business model partly explain this gap.**

The theory of change for census support sets out two lines of action: support to national capacity for the production and availability of data and support to national capacity for data dissemination and use in evidence-based policy and programming. The expected changes in data analysis and use for policymaking did not occur. Several reasons explain this: the narrow framing of the census operation (i.e. the census is seen as a periodic, one-off exercise rather than a continuous, 10-year national capacity development process); the limited technical backstopping to support use provided by regional offices and headquarters; and the lack of investment by programme countries and development partners to the full census cycle. Moreover, the modes of engagement recommended in the UNFPA business model for countries in the yellow and pink quadrants (countries with the highest capacity and the lowest need for financing for their development programmes) do not reflect the actual strategies needed to promote the use of census-related data (i.e. advocacy and policy dialogue alone — without technical assistance — are largely insufficient to enhance capacity for data use).

**Conclusion 6: UNFPA support featured good quality assurance mechanisms for census, including for census governance. However, the use and structure of these mechanisms was highly variable in practice and not part of a corporate guidance.**

Quality assurance mechanisms include mechanisms to ensure and measure data quality (e.g. post-enumeration surveys) as well as census governance mechanisms (National and International Advisory Committees, donor coordination mechanisms and population outreach campaigns). These mechanisms are crucial to ensuring data quality, to guaranteeing the application of United Nations principles (e.g. on equity and national ownership), and to ensuring transparency and effective accountability, thereby guaranteeing the independence of the census process and results. UNFPA, particularly at the regional and country levels, played a distinctive role in ensuring that these mechanisms were in place and in promoting and advocating for their adoption. Notwithstanding their importance, there were no UNFPA corporate guidelines on **when, why, how or in what sequence** such mechanisms should be established and used. No common minimum standards have been established and the mechanisms differed substantially across cases. This uneven approach to quality assurance was linked to the absence of an *ex-ante* assessment culture.

**Conclusion 7: The value for money of UNFPA support to census varied.**

It was dependent on what was being assessed. Value for money was extremely high in terms of the contribution support to census made to overall strategic worldwide UNFPA positioning, high for UNFPA support to enhancing national capacity for data production and availability, and low for enhancing national capacity for data use.

Value for money was remarkably strong when considering corporate value: though expenditure was quite modest, support to census conferred upon UNFPA an important strategic positioning in partner countries above and beyond its impact on data production and use. Additionally, support to census amplified the UNFPA ability to deliver on all other outcomes of the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan, further strengthening value for money.

**Conclusion 8: UNFPA support to census was highly demand-driven, a positive feature that generated national ownership and leadership. However, there were risks associated with this approach in the absence of high quality and timely needs assessments.**

Risks appeared when the approach was taken to an extreme (i.e. when country offices merely responded to demand). In such cases, the UNFPA advisory role was undermined (purely demand-driven approaches tend to undermine innovative and positively disruptive advice from UNFPA). Further, UNFPA support tended to focus on short-term, ad hoc responses rather than on mid- to long-term plans and strategies on, for example, capacity development. In this context, the absence of systematic needs assessments of national stakeholders (especially regarding the capacity to analyse and use data for advocacy and policymaking) hindered the establishment of long-term capacity development strategies.

**Conclusion 9: Although population censuses are statistical operations of a technical nature, they also carry significant sociopolitical implications. However, there was no UNFPA-wide guidance on how to address these dimensions or to ensure the reliability, credibility and legitimacy of census results.**

Albeit technical in essence, census operations have social and political implications. Census results may impact on aspects related to ethnicity, equity, diversity and religion—particularly in countries with diverse political, ethnic and religious make-ups and in countries with histories of conflict and fragility. These implications raise certain challenges regarding the participation of the population and the reliability and confidence of census results. However, there is no corporate guidance at UNFPA on how to address ethnicity or other sensitive questions, including on when and how to organize civil society consultations

or conduct political risk assessments (which are particularly important in post-conflict environments). In the absence of such guidelines, country offices tended to approach these issues in different ways, which may not have promoted human rights most effectively or appropriately.

**Conclusion 10: Population censuses are invaluable tools for monitoring progress in development indicators. However, UNFPA has not yet prompted partner governments to explore the full potential of linking and combining census data with national surveys or other sources of data for development, including administrative sources and big data.**

Census data not only provides the size of population groups to serve as denominators for various ratios, but also direct information ('numerators') on the status of education, health, employment and access to resources for particular groups and individuals. In combination with others surveys, census results can be used to map poverty at a low geographical level. Yet during the 2010 round, UNFPA support on data collection remained quite siloed, with support to census and support to surveys often delivered separately. Big data potentially offers the ability to update census information during intercensal periods and/or to further investigate crucial global challenges, such as migration, health and poverty. However, the analytical possibilities of the census — alone or in combination with other sources — were not fully explored.

## Recommendations

### I - Consolidate the position of UNFPA on population and housing censuses

**Recommendation 1: Based on the relevance, positive results, high corporate value and that it proved paramount to the success of the 2010 round overall, UNFPA should continue and expand its support to population and housing censuses and should draw up a corporate strategy and guidance for the 2020 round.**

UNFPA support to census should lead to enhanced capacity for data use in policymaking, should advance the International Conference on Population and Development agenda and should make progress towards implementing the UNFPA mandate related the Sustainable Development Goals. Strengthening NSO capacity to conduct census and other surveys should be an intermediate objective. The population and development branch at the technical division should develop a theory of change for support to census and a concise programmatic framework for support to the 2020 census round (with a corresponding results framework and indicators). Census support should be envisioned as a continuous, ongoing and dynamic process that encompasses the entire 10-year period between censuses. The census should also be

envisioned as the backbone of national statistical systems. To expand the provision of support to census, this framework should be accompanied by formal, comprehensive and structured guidance for regional and country offices (i.e. guidelines on UNFPA support to the 2020 census round).

**Recommendation 2: UNFPA should adapt current human resource and technical assistance strategies to address attrition in census expertise and ensure adequate support to the 2020 census round.**

Towards this end, UNFPA should: (i) conduct an in-house mapping exercise that covers all levels of the organization to take stock of all available organizational census and data for development expertise and (ii) develop corporate guidelines on the minimum qualifications needed by UNFPA staff to effectively support census. Based on the mapping and the identified minimum qualifications, conduct a capacity assessment of in-house census expertise and develop a capacity development strategy to address existing gaps. In addition, UNFPA should redesign the population-development-hub to better tap into the internal pool of census knowledge and external expertise and develop a pool of Chief Technical Advisers with previous experience supporting census. Finally, UNFPA should explore the possibility of reconstituting the Country Technical Teams at the regional level to support the production, analysis, dissemination, and use of census and census-related data for policy development.

**Recommendation 3: UNFPA should proactively activate knowledge management functions at the corporate level in a way that benefits the transfer and use of the vast amount of (currently underutilized) knowledge and experience on census support that was generated by the 2010 census round.**

To facilitate knowledge transfer of census support generated by the 2010 census round, regional offices and the Knowledge Management Branch should conduct a mapping exercise to identify and systematize census support experiences that could contribute to an organizational census knowledge base. Additionally, the exercise should identify good practices, including on use of census and survey data in policymaking, and systematically include them within the good practices database currently being developed by the Knowledge Management Branch.

### II - Exploit the full potential of census data

**Recommendation 4: UNFPA must decide whether support to the 2020 census round should focus primarily on the production and availability of data or also include an emphasis on the use of data for policymaking.**

If UNFPA emphasizes the use of data for policymaking, it should ensure that the actual implementation strategy is consistent with the theory of change,

allowing for adaptations of the business model so that modes of engagement can adequately adjust to the wide variety of country contexts, the variations within countries and UNFPA support settings.

The following paragraphs offer some operational suggestions to shift the focus from production and availability to dissemination and use of census-related data at the country level:

**Planning and programming:** UNFPA should ensure that census project documents (in census work plans and budgets) include the connection between data and policies. Planned activities on analysis and data use for policymaking should be included from the onset. Throughout the process, census activities should include user-producer consultations and provide support for developing the capacity of data users to analyse and use data for policymaking or advocacy.

**Implementation strategies:** UNFPA should: develop the capacity of NSOs to identify the potential uses of the data they produce; expand its work with civil society organizations (CSOs) and academia in order to promote the use of data within programme countries; expand its focus on data use to local administrations; and advocate that governments systematically include policy impact assessments in projects of laws to be discussed by parliaments (which will promote evidence-based policymaking).

**Modes of engagement:** UNFPA should foster capacity development as a mode of engagement in order to enhance national stakeholder ability for the use of census-related data. In addition, UNFPA should utilize its recognized convening role in census by using a partnership approach (particularly within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goal Agenda), as a mode of engagement for strengthening the capacity for the use of census-related data in policymaking.

**Recommendation 5: UNFPA should work with NSOs to ensure that the dissemination of census-related data fosters the use of data in policymaking and advocacy.**

Dissemination should be viewed as the link between data availability and use for policymaking. UNFPA should advocate for, promote and facilitate the increased frequency and content quality of user-producer consultations on census data dissemination. UNFPA could also play a crucial bridging role when promoting the use of anonymized microdata, working together with NSOs to raise awareness on feasible alternatives for publishing anonymized microdata, and then supporting microdata use by researchers, civil society and academia. Furthermore, UNFPA country office staff should support NSO efforts to find new ways of presenting data to foster use (by, for example, supporting the adoption of available technologies to support dissemination, combining census data with geo-localized information on equipment and

promoting innovative visualization techniques to present statistical information in a user-friendly way). Finally, thematic reports published from the census should use census data to show inequalities or gaps in access to resources, thus supporting the allocation of public expenditures based on empirical assessments.

**Recommendation 6: UNFPA should explore the potential uses of combining census data with other sources, including surveys, administrative sources and other sources of data for development in order to foster full use of census data within the framework of national statistical systems.**

To fully exploit census data use, census data should be linked to other data sources within national statistical systems and beyond (e.g. large structured and unstructured datasets that are generated beyond surveys).

UNFPA should intensify its recognized convening role within the context of support to census. It should expand this role by more actively participating in country forums and mechanisms that are set up to strengthen overall national statistical capacity. Moreover, UNFPA should support programme country efforts to explore the possibilities of combining census data with data from other surveys and administrative sources. UNFPA should also develop and disseminate small-area estimation methodologies that combine census and household survey data (e.g. in order to analyse gender at the local level). In collaboration with programme countries, UNFPA should explore the potentialities of big data in combination with census data in order to develop analysis on topics related to its mandate, such as family planning, child marriage and the demographic dividend.

### III – Explore new resource mobilization strategies and tap into the full potential of South-South cooperation

**Recommendation 7: UNFPA should examine new funding mechanisms to support the dissemination and use of data for development. In particular, UNFPA should explore the feasibility of and possibilities offered by a global-level trust fund dedicated to supporting the dissemination and use of data, including census-related data in the 2020 census round.**

A global-level trust would support the use of census data as well as data generated through other sources. Census-related data is an important source of information for development within national data ecosystems, yet it is not the only one. A global trust fund would also be appropriate because it would recognize and reflect census-related data as a public good that can be used by national stakeholders and development partners at the national, regional and global levels.

Moreover, a trust fund could address some of the

challenges raised in this report, including the limited levels of support to the dissemination and use of census-related data, the narrow conception of census (i.e. census seen as a one-off exercise) and the low value for money of the use of census-related data.

UNFPA should use its recognized convening role to lead the process and bring relevant actors into the discussion within the framework of Agenda 2030, which underscores the need for data.

Some suggestions concerning support to the dissemination and use of census data within the trust fund would be: that eligible activities for funding under the census part of the trust fund could include capacity development for data analysis and use in policymaking, mobilization of international high-level expertise for knowledge transfer and exchange of experiences on dissemination and use of census-related data. Furthermore, the trust fund could foster the implementation of innovative technology for better dissemination and use of data by providing resources for such initiatives.

**Recommendation 8: In line with the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan, UNFPA should prioritize exploring the full potential of South-South cooperation for census support so that South-South cooperation becomes a key strategy of UNFPA support to the 2020 census round.**

Regional offices should undertake a mapping to identify those countries that may benefit from South-South cooperation. Drawing on good practices on data use in the 2010 census round, regional offices should expand upon the focus of currently successful South-South cooperation exchanges for census. This expanded focus should support exchanges on analysis, dissemination and the use of census-related data for policymaking. In addition to NSOs, UNFPA should include a range of stakeholders in South-South cooperation exchanges on census (e.g. ministries, academia, CSOs).

# 1. Introduction – Objective, scope and methodological approach

## 1.1. Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

The **purpose** of the evaluation is to assess UNFPA support to strengthening national capacity for the production and dissemination of disaggregated quality data and its use in evidence-based decision-making and policy formulation over the period of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census (the “2010 census round”).

In addition, the evaluation serves as an accountability tool to the UNFPA Executive Board, programme countries and donors as well as other key stakeholders involved in the UNFPA support to the 2010 census round.

The evaluation’s three primary **objectives** are:

- To assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UNFPA support to the 2010 census round;
- To assess the extent to which census data are disseminated and used for the development of national policies, development plans and programmes related to population dynamics, reproductive health and rights, youth and gender equality; and
- To identify lessons learned and generate knowledge to inform the midterm review of the UNFPA 2014–2017 Strategic Plan, in particular Outcome Four,<sup>1</sup> and to inform the support of UNFPA to the 2020 census round and the post-2015 development agenda on data for development.

## 1.2. Scope of the evaluation

The **geographical scope** of the evaluation is worldwide, including all countries in which UNFPA provided support to census. The evaluation covers the **period from 2005 to 2014** and addresses **three levels of analysis**: country, regional and global (as well as their interrelationships). The national level consists of both the central and local tiers of government administration.

The scope of the assessment encompasses an analysis

### Box 1. The term ‘data’

By ‘data’ we refer to statistical data in a broader sense, including population and housing census data as well as other relevant demographic and socioeconomic data linked to the census and its products, such as population projections and population-based surveys. The census is an intrinsic part of the national statistical system, which itself includes a number of surveys associated with the census, either because they use the cartography and sampling of the census or because they use census data directly.

of the relevance of UNFPA support to census data availability and the implementation of UNFPA support to enhancing national capacities on census data production, dissemination, analysis and use in decision-making and policy formulation. The assessment focuses on the effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and added value of UNFPA support.

Considered beyond the scope of the evaluation, the evaluation does not assess the use of data in policy spheres outside of UNFPA core programmatic areas. Similarly, assessing the quality and impact of national policies is a responsibility of partner governments, and thus also falls beyond the scope of this evaluation.

### Box 2. The scope of the assessment

The evaluation scope covers UNFPA support to all stages of the census process as well as the use of data for decision- and policymaking at the country level.

## 1.3. Evaluation process and methodology

### 1.3.1. Overview of evaluation process

The evaluation process consists of five key phases (see Figure 1).<sup>2</sup>

1 Outcome Four: Strengthened national policies and international development agendas through integration of evidence-based analysis on population dynamics and their links to sustainable development, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, HIV and gender equality.

2 Phases 3 and 4 were carried out in parallel because country cases study reports were being drafted at the same time as the regional and global level interviews were being conducted.

Figure 1. Evaluation phases



### 1.3.2. Overall evaluation approach

The evaluation followed a mixed-method, multiple-level analysis and utilization-focused approach. Following a **mixed-method approach**, the evaluation combined qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. It applied a **multiple-level analysis** as the assessment covered the national, regional and global dimensions of UNFPA support to census. The evaluation was **utilization-focused**, because the intended users of the evaluation were at the centre of the exercise at all times. The focus on utilization was ensured through consultations with the evaluation reference group tasked to provide technical guidance to the evaluation and through extensive consultations with users throughout the evaluation process (see validation mechanisms in section 1.3.7).<sup>3</sup>

Other features of the methodological approach include: a **focus on the output and outcome levels**, given that the impact level (associated with policy implementation and effects on the population) was outside the scope of the evaluation; an approach to qualitative causal analysis based on **contribution** rather than attribution when assessing effectiveness and sustainability;<sup>4</sup> and a particular **emphasis on triangulation** to guarantee the reliability and robustness of the findings. The team applied multilevel triangulation, which includes: triangulation across various data sources; triangulation across data collection methods (individual interviews, group interviews, surveys, secondary sources); and triangulation across different levels of analysis.

With the objective of ensuring the feasibility and consistency of the approach, the first case study, Peru, was used as a **pilot to test the methodology**. As a result

3 The evaluation reference group consisted of individuals with evaluation and thematic expertise, including individuals from UNFPA business units (at the global and regional levels), other United Nations agencies and the donor community. The reference group supported the evaluation at key moments, ensuring the high technical quality of evaluation products.

4 This approach is in line with Michel Quinn Patton's definition on contribution analysis (Patton, Michael Quinn. Qualitative evaluation and research methods. SAGE Publications, Inc, 1990. Page 601.)

of the pilot, the scope of the evaluation, the evaluation matrix and the interview protocols were revised. Further, the extended desk phase (which included the assessment of seven additional countries), was fully developed.

### 1.3.3. Analytical framework: evaluation questions and criteria

The analytical framework includes the scope of the assessment, the sequence of analysis and the tools applied to provide credible and evidence-based answers to the evaluation questions. Five evaluation criteria and seven evaluation questions defined the scope of the assessment (see Table 1). Each evaluation criterion was covered by one or more evaluation questions.

The terms of reference included an initial set of **evaluation questions** that were refined and adjusted subsequent to the pilot mission and comments from the reference group. The final evaluation questions were grounded in the theory of change — a reconstruction, based on the four UNFPA strategic frameworks covered during the period, of how the desired changes sought by UNFPA support to the 2010 census round were expected to happen (see section 2.2.2 and chapter 4.2 for details). See Table 1 for the links between the questions, the criteria and the level of analysis addressed in each question.

Each evaluation question was broken down into a series of **assumptions**,<sup>5</sup> which further narrowed questions by clearly specifying what should be checked when answering the question. Data collection focused on gathering data on **indicators** (i.e. evidence linked to the assumptions). Evaluation questions, evaluation

criteria, assumptions, indicators, references to the sources of information and the tools required for data collection are summarized in the **evaluation matrix**, the primary tool guiding the process of data collection, analysis and the presentation of evaluation findings (see Annex 5).<sup>6</sup>

### 1.3.4. Evaluation components

The evaluation components are the lines of evidence used to inform the three levels of analysis when addressing evaluation questions. There are six evaluation components:

1. Country case studies;
2. Extended desk review countries;
3. The NSO survey;
4. The country office survey;
5. The regional interviews and desk study; and
6. The global interviews and desk study.

The three levels of analysis overlap, with national-level analysis providing information for the regional and global levels of analysis. Similarly, global-level interviews provide information that can be used in the regional analysis and offer insights on experiences occurring at the national level. The intersecting position of the country office survey in Figure 2 indicates the dual national-regional scope of the survey, as well as the fact that its results can be used for the global analysis. Similarly, the NSO survey, though national in scope, generates aggregate results that can be used in the global analysis.

The stakeholder questionnaire is contained in the extended desk reviews and not considered an

**Table 1. Evaluation questions, evaluation criteria and levels of analysis**

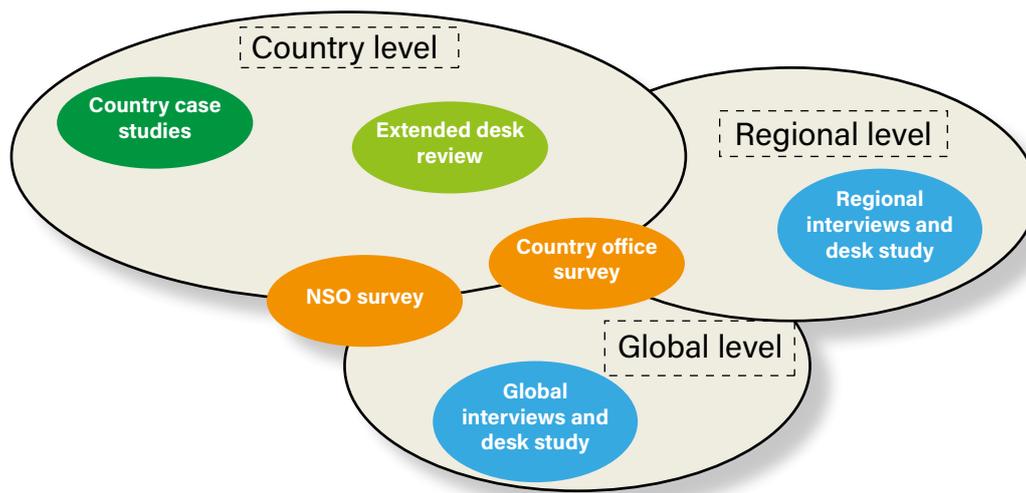
Evaluation question (headings by topic)		Evaluation criterion	Level of analysis
<b>Evaluation question 1</b>	Alignment	Relevance	National, regional and global
<b>Evaluation question 2</b>	Capacity for production and dissemination (NSO)	Effectiveness and sustainability	National
<b>Evaluation question 3</b>	Capacity for use of data	Effectiveness and sustainability	National
<b>Evaluation question 4</b>	Use of resources and internal synergies	Efficiency	National, regional and global
<b>Evaluation question 5</b>	Networks: partnerships and South-South cooperation	Efficiency and effectiveness	National, regional and global
<b>Evaluation question 6</b>	Added value	Added value <sup>7</sup>	National, regional and global
<b>Evaluation question 7</b>	Human Rights and gender equality	Effectiveness	National

<sup>5</sup> These are also known as judgement criteria.

<sup>6</sup> The evaluation matrix was adjusted during the data collection process, but the evaluation questions and assumptions remained essentially the same; the majority of adjustments were made to the indicators.

<sup>7</sup> The added value was included in the terms of reference as an evaluation question from the onset. When questions were grouped, added value remained a question and has been treated as an evaluation criterion given its strategic importance.

Figure 2. Evaluation components and levels of analysis



evaluation component. This is because unlike the other two surveys, which had global coverage, the scope of the stakeholder questionnaire is circumscribed to some extended desk review countries only.

### Country case studies

A country case study is an in-depth analysis of a specific UNFPA support setting, itself a combination of a particular country context with a modality of support. Case studies were conducted in countries where support to census had been provided and where cases illustrated the range and modalities of UNFPA

support for the production and use of census-related data within diverse contexts. Each case study involved a two-week, in-depth field visit conducted by a team of three to four experts,<sup>8</sup> and the production of a stand-alone country case study report.<sup>9</sup> A prime aim of the case studies was to inform and provide input to this evaluation report.

### Selection criteria

Purposeful sampling was utilized for the selection of the sample. One country case study was selected in each of the six UNFPA regions of intervention.<sup>10</sup>

Selection criteria included:<sup>11</sup>

- UNFPA financial support (inclusive of core and non-core funds) to census: the sample included countries receiving high to medium levels of financial investment.<sup>12</sup>
- The number of census stages supported by UNFPA: the sample had to include countries in which UNFPA provided support to four or more stages of the census.
- The year in which the census was conducted: the sample had to include countries where the census had been conducted several years ago, allowing for a better assessment of the use of data for policymaking, as well as countries where the census had been conducted more recently, enabling better access to stakeholders (including census supervisors and enumerators) and a clearer picture

#### Box 3. The evaluation office survey of countries to which UNFPA provided support to census was used

- 1) To identify the country offices that had provided support to the 2010 census round;
- 2) To identify the date of the census in each country;
- 3) To identify the number of census stages supported by UNFPA in each country;
- 4) As an input to draw up the typology of interventions of UNFPA support (see Chapter 2); and
- 5) As an input to determine the census financial expenditure (see Chapter 2).

8 Each country team was comprised of a census expert, an evaluation expert, a national consultant and in four (out of the six) case study field visits, the evaluation manager from the UNFPA independent Evaluation Office.

9 The six country case study reports are available at: <http://www.unfpa.org/news/unfpa-support-population-and-housing-census-data>

10 Arab States; Asia and the Pacific; Eastern Europe and Central Asia; Eastern and Southern Africa; Latin America and the Caribbean; and Western and Central Africa.

11 For a more detailed description of the selection process and the application of the criteria, see chapter 6.1 of the Inception Report "Selection of Country Case Studies." Available at: <http://www.unfpa.org/admin-resource/evaluation-unfpa-support-population-and-housing-census-data-inform-decision-making>

12 The sample included countries with a medium or high level of UNFPA engagement, as it would have made little sense to allocate time and resources conducting in-depth, in-country case studies of countries for which UNFPA did not provide much support to the 2010 census round.

Table 2. UNFPA country quadrants — modes of engagement by setting

Ability to finance	Need			
	Highest	High	Medium	Low
Low	Advocacy and policy dialogue/ advice, knowledge management, capacity development, service delivery	Advocacy and policy dialogue/ advice, knowledge management, capacity development, service delivery	Advocacy and policy dialogue/ advice, knowledge management, capacity development	Advocacy and policy dialogue/ advice, knowledge management
Lower-middle	Advocacy and policy dialogue/ advice, knowledge management, capacity development, service delivery	Advocacy and policy dialogue/ advice, knowledge management, capacity development	Advocacy and policy dialogue/ advice, knowledge management	Advocacy and policy dialogue/ advice
Upper-middle	Advocacy and policy dialogue/ advice, knowledge management, capacity development	Advocacy and policy dialogue/ advice, knowledge management	Advocacy and policy dialogue/ advice	Advocacy and policy dialogue/ advice *
High	Advocacy and policy dialogue/ advice *	Advocacy and policy dialogue/ advice *	Advocacy and policy dialogue/ advice *	Advocacy and policy dialogue/ advice *

Note: \* Physical presence only in select countries

Table 3. Countries selected for the case studies and for the extended desk reviews

Regions	Case study countries	Extended desk review countries
Western and Central Africa	Mauritania	Cameroon
Eastern and Southern Africa	Kenya	Rwanda
Asia and the Pacific	Myanmar	Bangladesh
Arab States	Palestine	Iraq
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	Tajikistan	Belarus
Latin America and the Caribbean	Peru	Brazil

Legend: The colours correspond to the UNFPA country quadrants presented in Table 2

of the support to the actual census operation.

- The level of government effectiveness (using the World Bank indicator):<sup>13</sup> the sample had to include countries with both low and high levels of government effectiveness.
- The UNFPA country classification system based on need and ability to finance as well as on modes of engagement by setting: the sample had to include countries in the four quadrants (red, yellow, orange and pink; see Table 2 and Box 4).

#### Extended desk review countries

To complement the country case studies, extended desk reviews were conducted in seven additional countries. The objective was to select countries presenting specific situations on the census operation or with particular modes of UNFPA support that, when coupled with the in-country case studies, would offer a more complete picture of the distinct types of UNFPA interventions. The dimensions, explored in

#### Box 4. Modalities of support or modes of engagement

A modality of support or mode of engagement is a particular combination of intervention strategies adopted by UNFPA in its support to census. These include: advocacy and policy dialogue, technical assistance and advice, service delivery and procurement, South-South and triangular cooperation, and knowledge management.

more detail in these countries, include South-South cooperation, development of national capacities, humanitarian response, conflict situations and a national emphasis on the utilization of census data.

The assessment in these countries involved studying documentation, conducting remote interviews and implementing a stakeholder questionnaire.

13 For more details see: <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx - home>

Table 4. Focus of the extended desk review countries

Country	Dimensions explored
Bangladesh	Capacity development
Belarus	Illustration of a pink country with important challenges
Brazil	South-South cooperation (with little UNFPA support)
Cameroon	Critical delays and situation finally solved
Indonesia	Illustration of focus on data utilization
Iraq	South-South cooperation (with UNFPA support)
Rwanda	Example of UNFPA not supporting the dissemination phase

Table 5. Coverage of evaluation questions by countries assessed in detail

	Evaluation question 1 Alignment	Evaluation question 2 Capacity of NSO (Effectiveness)	Evaluation question 2 Capacity of NSO (Sustainability)	Evaluation question 3 Data use (Effectiveness)	Evaluation question 3 Data use (Sustainability)	Evaluation question 4 Efficiency	Evaluation question 5 Networks	Evaluation question 6 Added value	Evaluation question 7 Gender & Human rights
<b>CASE STUDIES - COUNTRIES</b>									
Kenya (2009)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mauritania (2013)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Myanmar (2014)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Palestine (2007)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Peru (2007)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tajikistan (2010)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>EXTENDED DESK PHASE - COUNTRIES</b>									
Bangladesh (2011)		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Belarus (2009)	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	
Brazil (2010)	✓						✓	✓	
Cameroon (2005)	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	
Indonesia (2010)								✓	✓
Iraq (not done)		✓					✓	✓	
Rwanda (2012)	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓

Table 5 provides an overall picture of the evaluation questions that were addressed in each country (both case study countries and extended desk review countries).

### The NSO and country office surveys and the stakeholder questionnaire

Two surveys and one questionnaire were conducted:

1. The NSO survey on technical assistance, capacity development and added value;
2. The country office survey on technical assistance, soft-aid and added value; and
3. The stakeholder questionnaire on the use of census-related data.<sup>14</sup>

The NSO and the country office surveys had worldwide coverage. The stakeholder questionnaire

was a complementary tool used only in some of the extended desk review countries to provide additional information on the use of data; it was not considered an evaluation component.

Annex 10 provides a detailed explanation of each survey, including the methodology utilized.<sup>15</sup> Survey coverage is presented in the next section.

The main feature of each survey is as follows:

#### NSO Survey

The NSO survey targeted the implementers of the census operation and the main partners for UNFPA support. The survey's objective was to collect primary data on UNFPA-provided technical assistance and capacity development as well as to enquire about NSO perceptions on the added value of UNFPA support. The

<sup>14</sup> The scope of the NSO and the country office surveys was expanded from the original scope outlined in the inception report. Following the inception phase, it was decided that both surveys would include the same questions on added value and technical assistance/capacity development, allowing for a comparative analysis.

<sup>15</sup> Note that Annex 11 includes the survey forms and Annex 12 presents the summary of results for the NSO and the country office surveys. Refer to annex 12 when references to survey results are made in the text throughout the seven evaluation questions in Chapter 3.

### Box 5. Soft-aid activities

Soft aid activities are those activities that, while not explicitly included within Annual Work Plans, provide valuable support to census, including by creating an enabling environment for the census and the ability of data to be used at the country level. Soft-aid activities are typically performed by the population and development officer or the focal point on census, the Resident Representative, or other UNFPA country office staff and include such activities as policy dialogue, advice, and facilitation / coordination among stakeholders at the national level.

target group included management and technical staff working in NSOs in all countries UNFPA supported in the 2010 census round.

#### *Country office survey*

The country office survey was sent to all UNFPA country offices that provided support to census during the 2010 census round. The objective was to collect primary data on soft-aid activities carried out by country offices (see Box 5) and the technical assistance provided to NSOs, as well as information on the self-perceptions on the added value of UNFPA. The questions on technical assistance and added value were the same in both the NSO and the country office surveys, allowing for direct comparisons.

#### *Stakeholder questionnaire*

The stakeholder questionnaire targeted users of census data (e.g. civil servants, researchers and

CSOs) and complemented information coming from remote interviews conducted in Bangladesh, Belarus, Cameroon, Indonesia and Rwanda (the extended desk review countries that informed Evaluation Question 3 on the capacity for data use; see Table 5).

#### Regional and global interviews and desk study

Extended desk reviews and case studies collected data and evidence on regional and global aspects, but not as a central focus. Specific regional and global interviews and document reviews were conducted with the objective of collecting and analysing information on the evaluation questions' regional and global dimensions. Regional and global interviews provided a direct channel for regionally and globally based stakeholders to voice their views.

The regional component encompassed the study of documentation with a regional scope and in-depth, semi-structured interviews with regionally based organizations and with staff of UNFPA regional offices.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the global component involved the analysis of relevant documentation and in-depth semi-structured interviews combined with group interviews with staff at UNFPA headquarters<sup>17</sup> and interviews with donors (specifically, the United Kingdom-DFID, the European Commission, Eurostat and Luxembourg), other United Nations agencies, the World Bank and census global players, such as the United Nations Statistical Commission.

Table 6 shows the degree to which each evaluation component generated evidence for each level of analysis.

**Table 6. Evaluation components and levels of analysis**

Evaluation component / levels of analysis	National level	Regional level	Global level
Country case studies	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓
Extended desk reviews	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓
NSO survey	✓ ✓ ✓	✓	✓
Country office survey	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓
Regional interviews and desk study	✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓
Global interviews and desk study	✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓

- ✓ ✓ ✓ The evaluation component fully covered that level of analysis.
- ✓ ✓ The evaluation component partially covered that level of analysis.
- ✓ The evaluation component tangentially covered that level of analysis.

16 Examples of regional organizations interviewed include the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

17 Including retired and former officials that were involved with the 2010 census round.

### 1.3.5. Methods for data collection

The **study of documentation** included consulting and studying secondary data, such as written publications (including both narrative and statistical digests), and encompassed a wide range of documentation within and outside of the UNFPA sphere. The documents consulted during the evaluation, which covered the three levels of analysis, are organized by category and presented in Annex 3.

With the purpose of ensuring that individual and group interviews were illustrative of the range of stakeholders, **stakeholder mappings** were undertaken prior to all field and desk case studies and regional and global interviews.

**Semi-structured individual interviews** involving, in most cases, face-to-face interviews, took place in countries covered by field visits and at the regional and global levels. Remote interviews (via Skype or telephone) were used for extended desk review countries and for those global and regional interviews

that were not conducted face-to-face. To ensure consistency across interviews, interview protocols were drawn up by stakeholder type (see Annex 8). Interview proceedings were recorded in interview logbooks (see Annex 9). The format for interview logbooks and protocols were tested in the pilot mission and subsequently adapted.

In-country case studies and the global component also featured **structured group interviews** (i.e. semi-structured in-depth interviews with more than one person). The structured group interviews followed a hybrid approach, falling between informal group interviews and full-fledged focus groups.<sup>18</sup> Structured group interviews were used both for collecting data and to validate and discuss preliminary findings.

The evaluation team interviewed 795 people during the evaluation, individually and through group interviews. Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of interviews by stakeholder type and level of analysis and Annex 4 provides a list of those interviewed.

Figure 3. Distribution of interviewed people by stakeholder type and by level of analysis



Table 7. Coverage of the NSO survey

Concept	Value	Description
Universe	130	Number of NSOs worldwide
Target population	113	Number of NSOs that received UNFPA support; the survey was sent to 113 NSOs
<b>Coverage</b> (response rate)	53 <b>(47%)</b>	Number of NSOs that responded to the survey (47% of the target population responded)

Table 8. Coverage of the country office survey

Concept	Value	Description
Universe	121	Number of UNFPA country offices worldwide <sup>19</sup>
Target population	103	Number of country offices that provided support to the 2010 census round. The survey was sent to 103 country offices.
<b>Coverage</b> (response rate)	65 <b>(63%)</b>	Number of country offices that responded to the survey (63% of the target population responded)

18 The terms of reference for regional offices. UNFPA internal document (undated).

19 This figure includes two Sub-regional Offices (one in the Pacific and one in the Caribbean).

The vast majority of stakeholders (80 per cent) were interviewed at the national level. The main reason for this is that the **unit of analysis** of the evaluation is the country, given that censuses are country-level operations and census data is mostly used at the country level.

The **NSO and country office surveys** were another main method for data collection (see Tables 7 and 8 for survey coverage; see Annex II for the survey forms).

A goodness of fit test (chi-square) was applied to the survey response datasets in order to ensure the representativeness of the distribution of respondents (by quadrant and geographical region) compared to the population. The chi-squared test was statistically significant for both quadrant and regions and for both surveys, indicating that there is no under- or over-representation of quadrants or regions in the sample of respondents; the NSO and country surveys are representative by quadrant and by region (see Annex 10 for a more detailed explanation and calculations).

The **stakeholder questionnaire** was a data collection method used specifically in extended desk reviews. This method was considered separately from the NSO and country office surveys because of major differences in thematic scope (the questions focused solely on data use) and target audience (the questionnaire was sent to a few countries only). The NSO and country office surveys were themselves lines of evidence, whereas the stakeholder questionnaire was a complementary instrument encompassed within a line of evidence — the extended desk reviews.

Half of the stakeholder questionnaire respondents were from the academic sector (researchers). The protocol for extended desk reviews designed during inception proved difficult to apply in Belarus and Cameroon because of external factors. As a result, the questionnaire could not be administered in those countries (see the limitations section).

**Direct observation** involved evaluation members observing users of UNFPA census support apply the knowledge acquired, the equipment received or the data generated by the census. Observation took place in several countries, including Myanmar (where census data processing was underway at the time of the in-country field visit) and in Peru (where the Ministry of Health delivered a presentation showcasing the use of census data on epidemiological planning work).

#### Box 6. The findings of the NSO and country office surveys can be generalized to the target population

Although the way the survey results are presented in the report is largely descriptive (on the whole, they discuss findings from the sample of survey respondents), the findings can be generalized to all UNFPA programme countries where support to census was provided. This is because the sample of respondents is representative (by UNFPA-country quadrant and geographical region) of all NSOs and UNFPA country offices.

**Cyber search data collection** (looking for evidence on the Internet) was applied systematically by national consultants in case study countries and occasionally used in the extended desk reviews by evaluation team members. The search focused primarily on finding evidence on the use of census data. At times, it was also used to explore the manner in which traditional and social media covered national debates on the census, as was the case in Myanmar.

#### 1.3.6. Methods for data analysis

The evaluation matrix provided the main framework for data analysis. Data were structured by assumption and then by the existence or absence of evidence (indicators). The quality and significance of the evidence were also assessed. Findings were formulated in line with the evidence found, first at the assumptions level and then at the evaluation question level. Conclusions correspond to a third, higher-level analysis, which identified strategic and operational issues of importance across and beyond evaluation questions. A number of specific methods were applied to analyse the data:

**Contribution analysis** was applied through a theory of change approach, which assessed the degree to which various identified factors contributed to observed changes at the country level. In this regard, case studies allowed for a more in-depth exploration of UNFPA contributions to the 2010 census round, as the interaction between multiple influencing factors and effects could be examined. Contribution analysis also facilitated the identification of alternative pathways for observed changes.

Table 9. Countries to which the stakeholder questionnaire was sent

Country	Target group	Number of respondents	Response rate
Indonesia	51	18	35%
Bangladesh	52	15	29%
Rwanda	70	4	6%

**Content analysis** was applied through an online evaluative database developed for this evaluation (the Evaluation Data Entry and Information Organization Tool). This database, designed with the purpose of centralizing and codifying information from interviews and documents, allowed for the entry of interview logbooks and docbook data and filtering by assumption.<sup>20</sup>

**Comparative and aggregate analysis** were used to compare findings across data sources, including field case studies, extended desk reviews and regional and global components. This was done using country, regional and global summary evidence tables. These tables were then merged into one master evidence table by evaluation question for analysis at the synthesis level. All evidence tables followed the structure of the evaluation matrix and allowed for the easy compilation and comparison of relevant findings.

**Descriptive statistics** (a description of sample frequencies) and **goodness of fit tests** were applied to the results of the NSO and country office surveys. They were used to assess whether the distribution of the sample of respondents followed the distribution of the population closely enough to determine that the sample was representative (by UNFPA-country quadrant and by geographical region) of the population as a whole. The goodness of fit tests found that both were.<sup>21</sup> Sample frequencies and contingency tables were used to assess the results of conditional filters (i.e. breaking respondents down by a particular feature, such as the proportions of NSOs that considered UNFPA to have a particular added value to those that did and did not receive UNFPA support).

### 1.3.7. Methodological approaches to ensure reliability and validity

**Triangulation** was used to ensure the reliability and credibility of findings (see section 1.3.2). It was applied at all levels and was conducted 1) by cross-checking different sources of information and data within and across evaluation components (lines of evidence) e.g. within case studies by comparing evidence generated by different sources (ministries, civil society, the UNFPA country office); and 2) by cross-checking findings or evidence from different evaluation components, for example, by comparing findings from case studies with findings from the regional component and the online surveys. Triangulation also occurred across data collection methods utilized in country case studies and extended desk reviews. In the latter, for example, the evidence or findings from individual interviews was compared with the results of the stakeholder questionnaire and evidence from documents.

The evaluation applied **internal and external validation mechanisms**. Internal validation took place through two evaluation team workshops (in July and October 2015). One workshop was used to validate the findings of case studies and extended desk reviews (country level analysis); the other was used to validate the results of the regional and global components and agree on conclusions. External validation consisted of a preliminary debriefing meeting with the Evaluation Reference Group in New York in July 2015 and debriefing meetings at the end of each country case study field visit with UNFPA country offices (and, in some cases, with NSOs). External validation also included a workshop with the UNFPA Population and Development Branch of the Technical Division in December 2015, a presentation to the UNFPA Interdivisional Working Group on Census in December 2015 and a workshop with the Evaluation Reference Group to validate the relevance and feasibility of the recommendations in January 2016.

### 1.3.8. Ethical principles for evaluation

The evaluation was designed and conducted in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the United Nations System.<sup>22</sup>

The induction team workshop, conducted with all evaluation team members prior to data collection, addressed a wide range of aspects covering ethical considerations: the design of the interview protocols, the production of stakeholder maps, do's and don'ts on the treatment of data, transparency and accountability aspects, and how to ensure respect for and no harm to national cultures. A number of ethical principles were reflected in the interview protocols, which provided guidance for evaluators and ensured consistency in the application of the principles (e.g. respect for dignity and diversity, confidentiality, avoidance of harm).

Because the evaluation methodology made intensive use of in-depth interviews and surveys as sources of primary data, **respect for confidentiality** was an important aspect to consider. Confidentiality was ensured by avoiding, in any of the reports produced, any mention to specific interviewee opinions and by using only aggregate data when referring to surveys. In addition, survey data have been processed following sound statistical standards and principles (e.g. consistency checks, data cleaning, data imputations).

**Respect for dignity and diversity** — and respect for local cultures in particular — was ensured by several means. All case study country teams featured a national consultant and involved consultations with UNFPA country offices in field mission planning and

20 Docbooks are data entry forms for written documents. They are the equivalent to interview logbooks for documents.

21 See Annex 10 for more details on the goodness of fit tests.

22 Available at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/ethicalguidelines> and <http://www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct>, both from March 2008.

preparation. With this, the team made sure safeguards were in place in order to ensure, among other things, respect for cultural differences, religious beliefs and practices, local customs and ethnicity. **Avoidance of harm** included avoiding any adverse effect of the evaluation on the institutional relationships of country offices with national and regional stakeholders. This was achieved, *inter alia*, by respecting protocols for arranging interviews, sharing agendas with country office staff and discussing potential risks in briefing meetings at country offices prior to data collection.

Whenever possible, face-to-face and remote interviews were conducted by more than one evaluator — three at times — to increase the probability of identifying and offsetting risks on the application of ethical principles.

**Broad consultation** was undertaken to ensure all relevant voices, opinions and views were heard. To that end, stakeholder maps were produced at the country, regional and global levels in order to identify relevant players as a precondition to ensure wide coverage. Similarly, the periods for data collection were extended for both remote interviews and surveys to ensure the likelihood that those who were unavailable could nonetheless express their views.

The evaluation placed special emphasis on **transparency and reporting back to key stakeholders**. Briefings and debriefings took place at the global level (headquarters), with the participation of regional offices. NSOs were debriefed on the results of the evaluation in a presentation at the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2016. Briefing and debriefings were systematically conducted in the six case study countries and were, at times, attended by NSOs. Additionally, all evaluation deliverables (inception report, country case studies and the evaluation report) were published online.<sup>23</sup> Case study reports and the evaluation report were also sent to country and regional offices for wider dissemination. Data generated throughout the evaluation, such as surveys results, interview logbooks and evidence tables for extended desk review countries, were kept in an internal database. Aggregate tabulated results from surveys are available upon request, whereas detailed survey responses and interview logbooks are not openly accessible for confidentiality purposes. In addition, the survey micro-datasets were anonymized prior to storage in the evaluation archives.

**Conflicts of interest** were avoided by ensuring that evaluation team members have not been directly involved in the design and implementation of any activity linked to the contribution of UNFPA support to the 2010 census round being evaluated.

### 1.3.9. Limitations and mitigating actions

Most limitations were related to data collection aspects. The boxes below summarize the main limitations and the actions carried out to mitigate them:

#### Limitation

There were constraints on the availability of key informants during the country case study field visits, in the extended desk reviews and for the regional and global interviews. This was occasionally exacerbated with challenges posed by staff turnover (staff no longer holding the position they were to be interviewed about).

#### Mitigation action

Evaluation team members conducted remote interviews following country visits and national consultants took follow-up actions in an attempt to redress the inability to hold on-site meetings due to key informant unavailability. The data collection period was extended for regional and global interviews, allowing additional time to identify the key people to be interviewed by the evaluation team. As a result of these mitigating measures, most key informants were interviewed during the evaluation.

#### Limitation

There was an absence of written documentation (e.g. minutes of meetings, written evidence of decisions taken and institutional positions) on census-related processes.

#### Mitigation action

Whenever possible, the evaluation team attempted to triangulate data sources, cross-checking one source with another to substantiate whether particular events or decisions (lacking documentary evidence) took place. When this was not possible or when triangulated evidence was inconclusive, reference to such meetings and decisions was not made in the analysis.

23 Available at: <http://www.unfpa.org/admin-resource/evaluation-unfpa-support-population-and-housing-census-data-inform-decision-making>

**Limitation**

The initial response rates to the NSO survey, the country office survey and the stakeholder questionnaire were low. There were problems contacting relevant stakeholders in some extended desk review countries.

**Mitigation action**

The period for responding to the two surveys and the stakeholder questionnaire was expanded and multiple reminders were sent out on the importance of the exercise. These actions proved effective for the NSO and country office surveys that, ultimately, featured more than acceptable response rates (47 per cent and 63 per cent, respectively). The risk of low response rates, generally associated with the use of online surveys, did not materialize for the NSO or country office surveys.

Final response rates to the stakeholder questionnaire were quite low. Rwanda registered a less than 10 per cent response rate, while accessibility problems prevented the survey from being administered in Belarus or Cameroon. As a consequence, triangulation was hampered and examples from these three countries were extremely limited. These countries are mentioned in the report only when illustrating factual data that needed no triangulation.

In Belarus, the team was able to follow the extended desk review protocol to gather documents and organize interviews with the UNFPA country office. The country office noted that due to the culture of the country, requests for interviews should be made via an official written request in Russian from the UNFPA independent Evaluation Office (sent by fax to the designated stakeholder). These letters were drafted and sent but were not answered. The triangulation of information was limited to document sources and interviews with the country office staff. This was cross-checked with the reply to the NSO survey (used as a proxy for an interview).

In Cameroon, the political sensitivity of the census was a difficult external factor to mitigate. The UNFPA country office confirmed that the extended desk review protocol could not be implemented. Interviews were conducted with the former UNFPA country representative as well as with the expert that conducted the audit of census. Documents were gathered and served as the source of information for Cameroon.

**Limitation**

There were misinterpretations of survey questions and inconsistency in replies.

**Mitigation action**

In order to minimize misinterpretation risks and inconsistency in replies, the NSO survey was piloted in Mauritania and the country office survey was piloted in Peru. Despite the piloting, a number of survey responses contained missing answers and incoherent responses. As an additional mitigating action, survey responses were recorded with missing and incoherent responses cleaned and erroneous inputs dismissed. The analysis provided in the report is based solely on the cleaned data.

## 2. Global context and the UNFPA strategic framework and programmatic response for the 2010 census round

### 2.1. Global context

#### 2.1.1. The International Conference on Population and Development and its 20-year review (2014)

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo proposed a new vision for the relationship between population, development and individual well-being. At the ICPD, 179 countries adopted a forward-looking, 20-year Programme of Action that built on the success of the population, maternal health and family planning programmes of the previous decades while addressing, with a new perspective, the population and development landscape of the early twenty-first century.

To support its goals, the ICPD Programme of Action specifies that:

“... valid, reliable, timely, culturally relevant and internationally comparable data form the basis for policy and programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Individuals, organizations and developing countries should have access, on a no-cost basis, to the data ... including those maintained by other countries and international agencies.”<sup>24</sup>

As a follow-up to the ICPD Programme of Action, a Framework of Action was presented in 2014 during the 47th Conference on Population and Development (as part of the ICPD Beyond 2014 process). The Framework of Action aimed to identify progress and achievements towards the ICPD goals set out in 1994 and to generate a renewed global commitment and consensus on a more equal and sustainable world.<sup>25</sup> In particular, the framework stresses that:

“Considerable weaknesses exist in the knowledge sector related to population and development in countries of the global South, including incomplete or unreliable data from civil registration, sample surveys and censuses, limited use of innovations such as geographic information systems and, more generally, an underdeveloped capacity for using data for development.”

The report further notes that despite significant improvements in data collection, particularly related to the use of new technologies, progress in many countries has, to date, been insufficient to foster effective knowledge-driven governance and development planning and strategies.

#### 2.1.2. Population and housings censuses

According to the international definition, a population and housing census is the total process of collecting, compiling, evaluating, analysing and publishing or otherwise disseminating demographic, economic and social data, pertaining, at a specified time, to all persons and to all living quarters in a country.<sup>26</sup>

The census is a critical planning tool, helping

#### Box 7. The main steps of a census

A census is a complex operation that entails numerous steps according to international recommendations,\* including:

- Legal basis for the census
- Budget and financial resources
- Planning
- Administrative organization
- Communication
- Cartographic preparation
- Questionnaire design
- Quality assurance plan
- Census tests
- Staff recruitment and training
- Enumeration (including supervision)
- Data processing (data entry, editing)
- Evaluation
- Dissemination
- Analysis

\* United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Rev. 2. Series M No. 67/Rev.2. New York, 2008, available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/census3.htm>

24 Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). ISBN 978-0-89714-022-5. Paragraph 12.1.

25 Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Beyond 2014. Commission on Population and Development. E/CN.9/2014/4.

26 UNSD, United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Rev. 2. Series M No. 67/Rev.2. New York, 2008, available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/census3.htm>.

policymakers plan for the future in terms of schools, clinics and hospitals, roads, urban infrastructure and more. A census can measure fertility, mortality and spatial distribution, which supports the ability to predict and plan for demographic trends.

Censuses are a rich source of information on the differences between men and women and girls and boys and can provide important data on the needs and requirements of population subgroups, such as adolescents.

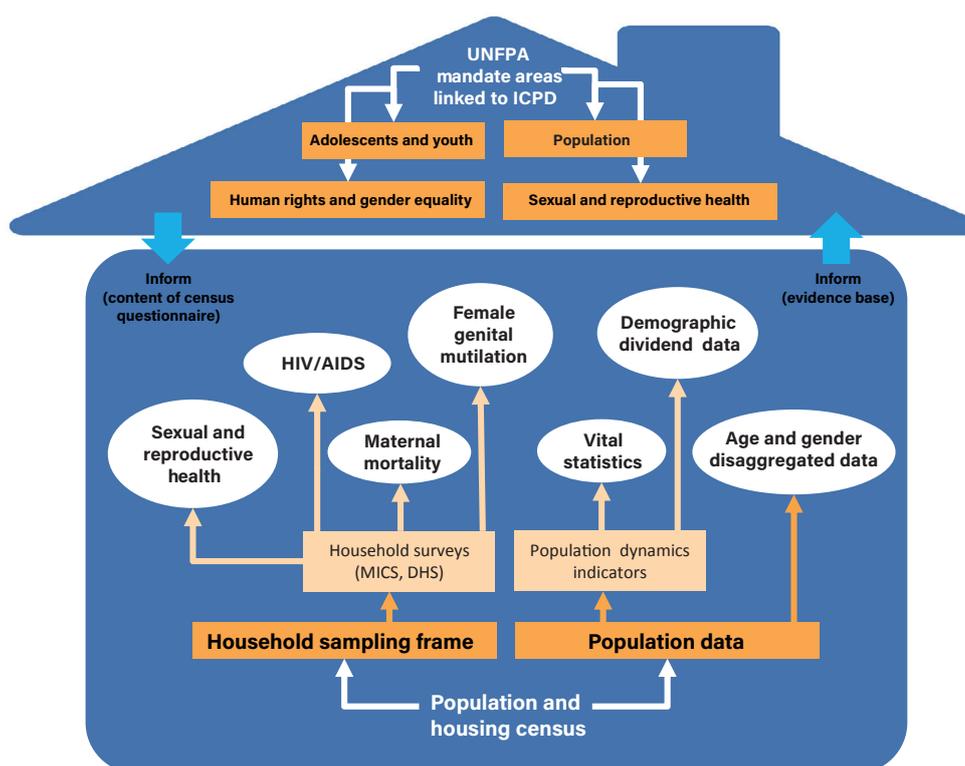
The census can, for example, uncover gender disparities in employment, literacy, age of marriage and assets. Censuses can also reveal the number of people with disabilities and orphans by area as well as map out the type of dwellings in an area, the source of drinking water, the level of access to telecommunications and

patterns of energy use.<sup>27</sup>

Combined with survey-based information, censuses allow analysis of geographical patterns of social characteristics, such as poverty mapping. They also provide the basic sampling frame for household surveys. For example, the methodological guide for Demographic and Health Surveys generally considers the census sample frame as the best available sampling frame in terms of coverage, cartographic materials and organization.<sup>28</sup>

Censuses also play a crucial role in assessing the comparability of indicators between countries. In many countries where the statistical system is not fully developed, population and housing censuses are often the main statistical operation.

**Figure 4. The contribution of census to the International Conference on Population and Development agenda and the statistical system**



27 UNFPA, The Population and Housing Census: Counting Everyone, available at [http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/uganda/2014/10/15/10789/unfpa\\_supports\\_census\\_counting\\_everybody/](http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/uganda/2014/10/15/10789/unfpa_supports_census_counting_everybody/)

28 ICF International. 2012. Demographic and Health Survey Sampling and Household Listing Manual. MEASURE DHS, Calverton, Maryland, U.S.A.: ICF International. ICF International. September 2012.

Figure 4 presents the contribution of census to the ICPD agenda, including the interlinkages of census and the UNFPA programmatic areas and the central role of census within the national statistical system. The census itself provides demographic data at the small geographical level, such as population by sex and age groups, and also housing conditions, enabling describing the situation of population groups (e.g. adolescents). In the absence of reliable vital statistics, the census provides measures of mortality and fertility, allowing for analysis of population dynamics, for example of the demographic dividend. The census provides the sample frame for household surveys such as Demographic and Health Surveys or Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys that give at national-level, detailed information related to sexual and reproductive health.

### 2.1.3. The 2010 round of population and housing censuses

In 2005, at its 36th session, the United Nations Statistical Commission approved the work programme of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses (2005–2014). The United Nations Economic and Social Council, in its 2005/13 resolution, stressed the importance of the 2010 round for socioeconomic planning and encouraged programme countries to conduct a population and housing census at least once between 2005 and 2014. The resolution also highlighted the importance of disseminating census results as an essential source of information for national, regional and international planning and development.<sup>29</sup>

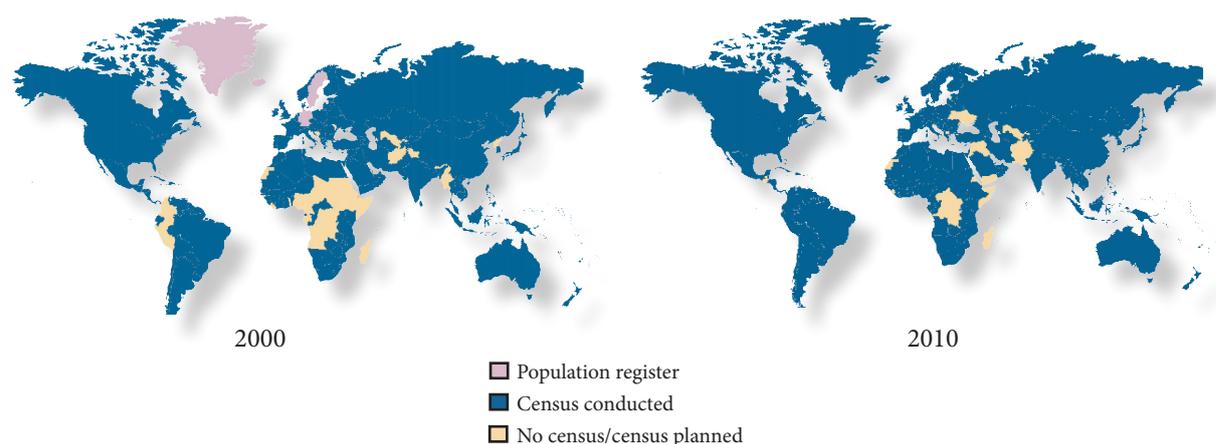
Approximately 6.4 billion people (93 per cent of the

estimated world population) were enumerated during the 2010 census round.<sup>30</sup> The number of censuses conducted peaked in 2011, with 60 countries or areas conducting a census that year.<sup>31</sup> Of the 21 countries or territories that did not conduct a census during the 2010 census round, nine were in Africa and eight in Asia, with conflict or instability as the primary causes for not conducting a census.<sup>32</sup>

The 2010 round was more successful than the 2000 census round, with seven more countries conducting a census. Indeed, the 2000 round was characterized by certain failures: 27 countries or territories did not carry out a census during the round (from 1995 to 2004). The majority of these were in Africa, where almost half of the population was not enumerated.<sup>33</sup> The main reason for this was the political situation (instability, conflicts), but budget constraints (the census is a significant financial burden) and a degree of disengagement by international donors in financially supporting the census also contributed to the lack of enumeration.

When analysed by region (according to UNFPA regional breakdowns), the 2010 census round showed important improvements in multiple regions. In Western and Central Africa, the proportion of the population enumerated increased by 55 percentage points, from 42 per cent enumerated during the 2000 round to 97 per cent enumerated during the 2010 round. In Eastern and Southern Africa, the percentage enumerated increased by 23 points, reaching 81 per cent of the population, while Latin America and the Caribbean saw a 10 percentage point increase, with 96 per cent of the population enumerated.

Figure 5. Comparison of the 2000 and 2010 population census rounds



Source: United Nations Statistics Division website - [unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/censusdates.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/censusdates.htm)

29 United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution 2005/13: 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme.

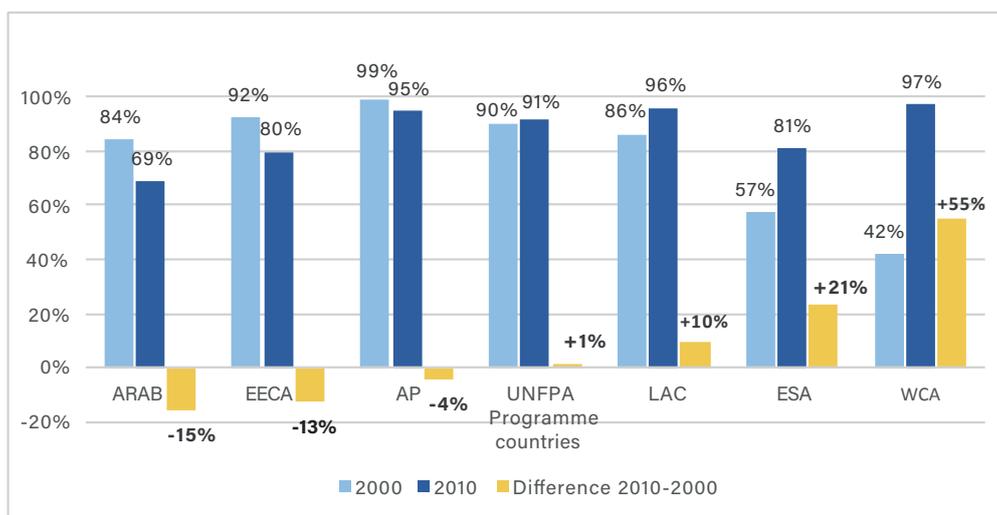
30 UNSD, 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme website, available at [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010\\_PHC/default.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010_PHC/default.htm)

31 Ibid.

32 The 21 countries or territories that did not conduct a census during the 2010 round are: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Guatemala, Haiti, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Syrian Arab Republic, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Western Sahara, and Yemen. South Sudan was not considered in the 2000 census round.

33 UNSD, The 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses: a global review, April 2011.

Figure 6. Proportion of population enumerated during the 2000 and 2010 census rounds by UNFPA regions



Source: UNSD

A decrease in the proportion of the population enumerated was observed in countries experiencing conflict or political instability: Pakistan in Asia Pacific, Ukraine in Eastern and Central Europe, and Syria, Iraq and Yemen in the Arab States. The Arab States region witnessed a decrease of 15 percentage points in the percentage of the population enumerated from the 2000 census round to the 2010 round (see Figure 6).

## 2.2. The support of UNFPA to the 2010 census round

### 2.2.1. Programmatic support

UNFPA plays a unique role within the United Nations system: to address population and development issues, with an emphasis on reproductive health and gender equality, within the context of the ICPD Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).<sup>34</sup> In collaboration with other United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), UNFPA supports population and housing censuses by strengthening processes and enhancing national capacity to generate, analyse, utilize and disseminate high-quality statistical data. UNFPA

engages primarily through advocacy, policy dialogue and advice and knowledge management. Census support is a key component of UNFPA interventions, and accounts for a significant proportion of resources within the population and development programmatic area at UNFPA.<sup>35</sup>

The 2010 census round covers the period from 2005 to 2014, which corresponds to four UNFPA programmatic periods operationalized in four strategic documents: The UNFPA Multi-year Funding Framework 2004-2007, the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2008-2011, the Mid-term Review of the Strategic Plan 2012-13 and the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

These frameworks constitute the thematic scope of the evaluation as well as the aggregated results framework to which UNFPA interventions aim to contribute. In addition, these frameworks contain the elements that constitute the intervention logic and underlying strategy guiding UNFPA support to census from 2005 to 2014.

Table 10 summarizes the higher-level objectives related to support to census for each strategic framework.

Table 10. Overview of the UNFPA programmatic framework over the 2010 census round

Framework	Focus / emphasis
Multi-year Funding Framework 2004-2007	Improve <b>utilization</b> of population data
UNFPA Strategic Plan 2008-2011	Data <b>used</b> at national and subnational levels <b>to develop and monitor</b> policies and programme implementation.
MTR of the Strategic Plan, 2012-2013	Improve data <b>availability</b>
UNFPA Strategic Plan 2014-2017	Strengthened <b>national policies</b> by means of <b>integrating evidence-based</b> analysis on population dynamics

34 United Nations Population Fund, the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2014-2017. Paragraph 29, DP/FPA/2013/12.

35 Ibid.

The main focuses are on data availability and data utilization, as well as the more specific goals of using data to develop and monitor policies and strengthening policies by making them evidence-based.

In 2008, UNFPA launched the **Special Initiative on Census (SIC): Supporting the 2010 Round**. The SIC, supported through a special unit at UNFPA headquarters, intended to enhance the support to census provided through UNFPA country programmes by facilitating access to technical resources and training opportunities as well as by providing guidance on resource mobilization and by encouraging South-South cooperation across countries and regions. Furthermore, SIC aimed at ensuring that data generated from the 2010 census round was widely disseminated and extensively used for the preparation of development plans and programmes and in their monitoring and evaluation.<sup>36</sup> Planned SIC activities included conducting needs assessments, inventorying available expertise on census, holding workshops, developing a website, developing examples of elements of specifications and programmes and devising various guides. Although the SIC was discontinued in 2011, a census analyst position was created in the Technical Division of UNFPA.

UNFPA underwent organizational changes during the 2010 census round. In 2008, regional offices were reorganized and decentralized to their respective geographical regions. This led to changes in the manner in which technical assistance was delivered: direct technical assistance was to be provided at the regional level, while the Technical Division at UNFPA headquarters was to shift towards more upstream work — the compilation of best practices and the development of general guidelines and technical products.<sup>37</sup> The decentralization process and the effects on technical assistance and support to country offices on census are addressed in Chapter 3.

During the 2010 census round, UNFPA provided support to more than 130 countries through, inter alia, policy dialogue and advice, advocacy, technical assistance, capacity development, procurement of equipment or services, financial support, coordination and management of financial resources for the census (on behalf of the partner government) and South-South cooperation (see Box 8).<sup>38</sup>

### 2.2.2. The Theory of Change of UNFPA support to census

Figure 7 depicts the census contribution line, a zoom-in into the outcome area of the overall theory of change presented in the inception report. The contribution

#### Box 8. Typology of interventions

- Advocacy and policy dialogue to encourage census taking, fundraising, and creating motivation and political commitments to collecting and using internationally comparable data.
- Technical assistance and advice for planning, preparing and carrying out the census, including dissemination and analysis activities.
- Service delivery and procurement (with core or non-core funds), including procuring services or equipment, such as scanners for questionnaire data capture, printing of questionnaires or paying field staff directly.
- Facilitation of South-South and triangular cooperation.

line illustrates how UNFPA support to census links to and advances the expected outcomes detailed in UNFPA strategic plans, including around data use.

The figure summarizes the common essence and spirit of the four results frameworks active during the period evaluated and the sequence of changes they sought to pursue in terms of better data for better policies.

The green-shaded circles represent changes at various levels of the effects chain, whereas the white boxes indicate the type of intervention strategies used to support census. As shown, UNFPA support to census intended to bring about change by 1) strengthening the capacity of national stakeholders to produce and disseminate census-related data (the **production strategy** depicted at the bottom of the figure) and 2) by strengthening the capacity of national stakeholders to analyse and use data for evidence-based policymaking (the **use strategy** shown on the right side of the figure).

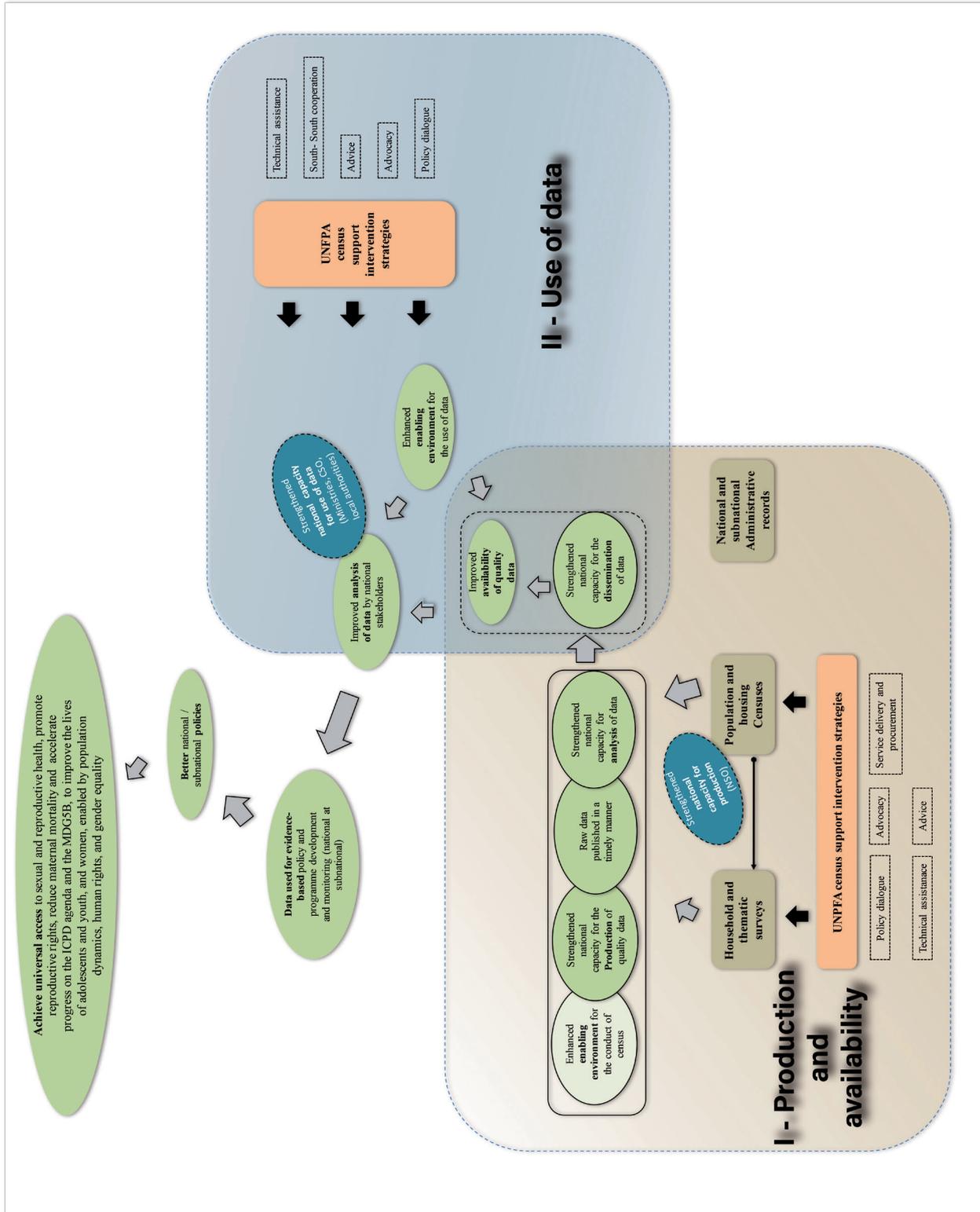
Chapter 4.2 includes a revised version of the theory of change, reflecting the findings of the evaluation.

36 2011 global and regional work plan: support to the 2010 round of population and housing census. Special Initiative on Census.

37 UNFPA Technical Division, Population and Development Branch, Activities developed under the Framework Agreement between the Government of Luxembourg and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in the area of Population and Development (“Demographic Evolutions”) 2008-2013.

38 UNFPA Evaluation Office survey of countries to which UNFPA provided support to census, October 2014.

Figure 7. The outcomes' contribution line of the theory of change of UNFPA support to census



### 2.2.3. Resources allocated to the support of the 2010 Census Round

The analysis in this section aims to capture financial support to the entire census operation. However, figures primarily reflect expenditure in support of certain stages: pre-enumeration (including resource mobilization), enumeration, analysis and dissemination. Expenditure in support of the use of census data for evidence-based policymaking — outside of the census operation *stricto sensu* — is not as readily captured or reflected. This is due, in part, to the limitations of the Atlas system<sup>39</sup> and the methodology utilized by the evaluation to determine expenditure in support of census.<sup>40</sup>

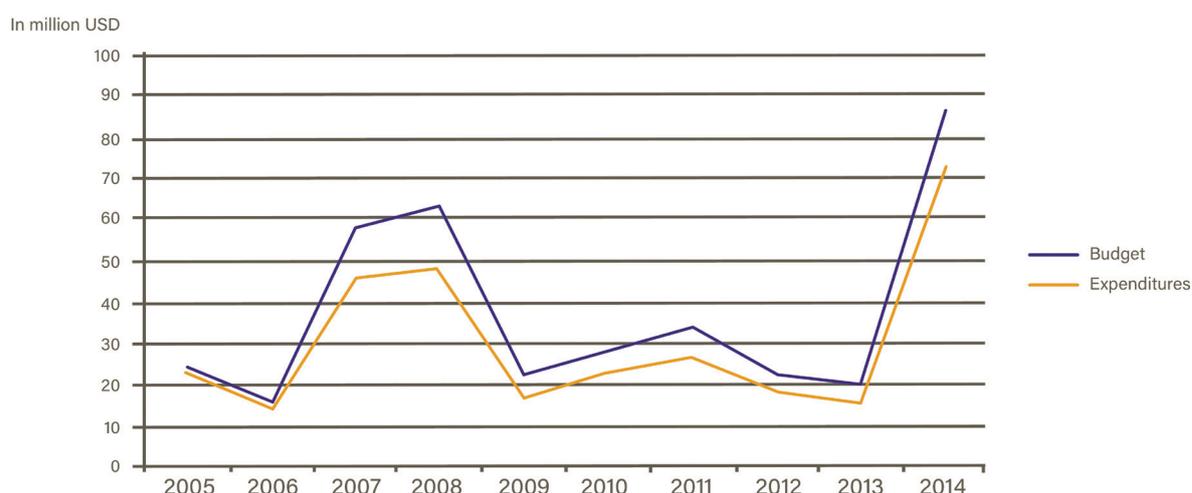
The total amount spent on support to census during the period under evaluation (January 2005 through December 2014) is \$301.7 million, with the amount spent varying over time (see Figure 8). The total amount

budgeted for census over the same time period is \$373.4 million. While the amount budgeted each year exceeds the amount spent, it does not, on the whole, do so dramatically, suggesting strong fund execution rates and, by extension, activity implementation rates.

Most (95 per cent) of the expenditures in support to censuses were spent at the country level; only 3 per cent were spent at the regional level and 2 per cent at the global level (see Table 11).

The sum of country office expenditures on census over time is, on aggregate, the highest in Eastern and Southern Africa, with Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab States region and Western and Central Africa following suit, respectively. Aggregate expenditures over time were the lowest in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

**Figure 8. Total amount budgeted and spent (including both core and non-core resources) on census from 2005 – 2014**



Source: Atlas Data January 1, 2005 – December 2014, generated at UNFPA headquarters and, in some cases, by country offices.

**Table 11. Total expenditures at the country, regional and global levels 2005–2014, in USD and percentage**

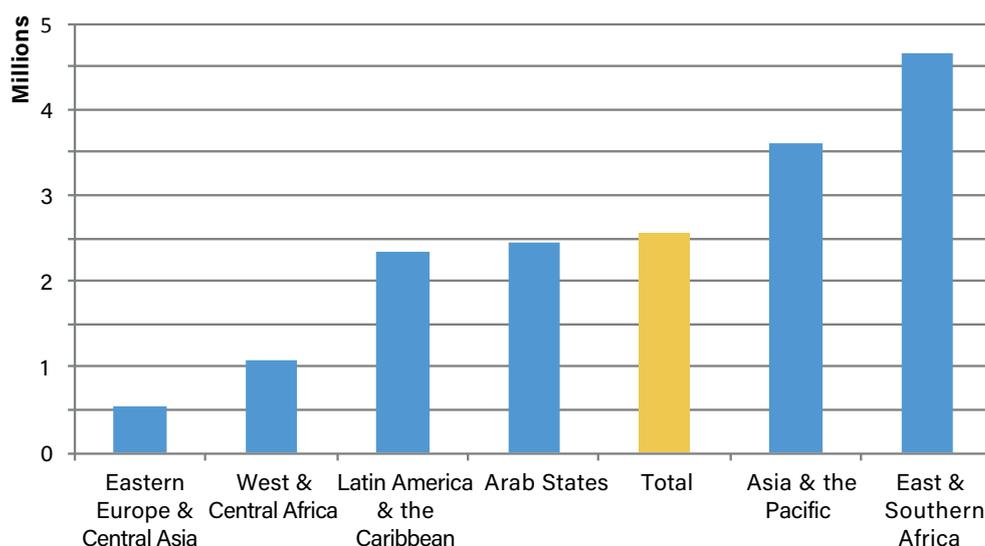
Level	Expenditures in USD					
	Core funds		Non-core funds		Total	
Country	92,551,764	88%	193,338,386	98%	285,890,150	95%
Regional	7,380,946	7%	1,477,181	1%	8,858,126	3%
Global	4,849,891	5%	2,070,227	1%	6,920,118	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>104,782,601</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>196,885,794</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>301,668,394</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Atlas Data January 1, 2005 – December 2014.

39 The expenditures tagging system does not capture the utilization of census expenditures by census phase, which makes it impossible to ascertain whether expenditures were allocated to the production or use of data.

40 For a detailed description of the methodology used, please see Volume 3, Annex 2.

Figure 9. Average expenditures (core and non-core funds) on census at the country office level grouped and ranked by region (2005 –2014), in USD



Source: Atlas Data January 1, 2005 – December 2014, generated at UNFPA headquarters and, in some cases, by country offices.

Table 12 lists the country offices by expenditure in support of census, capturing the top 15 country offices. The Myanmar country office registered the highest expenditure of all country offices over the period under evaluation (2005 to 2014), spending \$36.4

million, with Peru following closely behind at \$33.7 million.<sup>41</sup> The Mozambique country office spent the third largest sum, \$21.7 million, while Sudan, with an expenditure of \$19.9 million, spent the fourth highest amount.<sup>42</sup>

Table 12. Top 15 country offices by expenditures in support of census

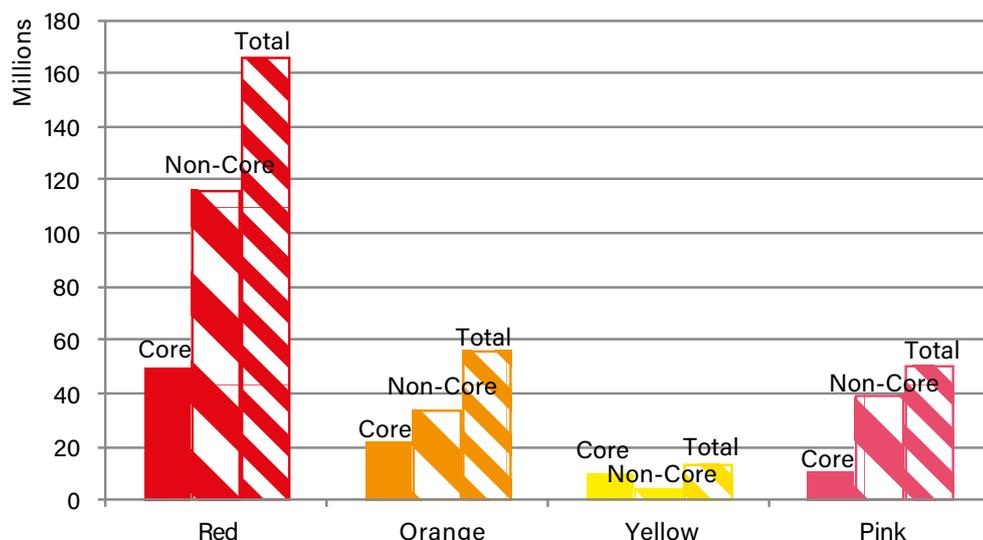
Country	Expenditures in USD		
	Non-core funds	Core funds	Total
Myanmar	30,292,438	6,126,799	36,419,237
Peru	32,265,100	1,487,303	33,752,402
Mozambique	18,379,492	3,314,801	21,694,293
Sudan	16,715,521	3,144,749	19,860,270
Malawi	12,669,835	6,119,967	18,789,803
Tanzania	11,865,390	1,545,683	13,411,072
Ethiopia	11,642,952	670,971	12,313,923
South Sudan	8,024,099	1,585,762	9,609,861
Bangladesh	8,136,245	196,220	8,332,465
Burundi	4,171,040	3,760,689	7,931,729
Afghanistan	7,287,528	498,535	7,786,063
Cambodia	2,737,398	3,942,869	6,680,268
Pakistan	2,083,721	4,204,616	6,288,337
Kenya	2,187,284	3,853,109	6,040,393
Timor Leste	320,381	4,887,278	5,207,659
<b>Total</b>	<b>168,778,424</b>	<b>45,339,350</b>	<b>214,117,774</b>
As percentage of total for all country offices	87%	49%	75%

Source: Atlas Data January 1, 2005 – December 2014, generated at UNFPA headquarters and, in some cases, by country offices.

41 The expenditures in Myanmar and Peru were largely non-core funded (external funds managed by UNFPA). There was a notable difference between the countries: the census in Myanmar was essentially funded by donors while the census in Peru was almost exclusively funded by the government.

42 The census in Sudan and South-Sudan was conducted simultaneously as part of the comprehensive peace agreement between Sudan and South-Sudan.

Figure 10. Total expenditure by country quadrant from 2005 to 2014, in USD



Source: Atlas Data January 1, 2005 – December 2014, generated at UNFPA headquarters and, in some cases, by country offices.

Reflective of the business model, Table 12 shows that all of the top 15 countries by expenditure (apart from Peru) belong either to the East and Southern Africa or Asia and the Pacific regions. Barring Peru (which funded its census almost exclusively through domestic funds), the countries listed relied primarily on donor contributions to fund the census. Their combined expenditure represents 75 per cent of total expenditure by UNFPA on support to the 2010 census round. These countries have also attracted the largest majority of external funding: they represent 87 per cent of the non-core funds managed by UNFPA and only about half of the UNFPA core fund expenditures.

Figure 10 illustrates the total expenditure on census by UNFPA country quadrant, the current UNFPA programme country classification system, which categorizes countries based on their capacities, need and ability to finance scaling from red (lowest ability to finance and highest need for support) to pink (highest ability to finance and lowest need).<sup>43</sup>

The structure of expenditures by UNFPA country quadrant is consistent with the corporate business model. Over the 2010 round, census expenditure was highest in the red quadrant, comprised of countries with high unmet need and low ability to finance, and decreasing for countries in the orange and yellow quadrants. The amount of expenditure in the pink quadrant is mainly due to Peru, where a significant amount of non-core funds from the government of Peru was spent by the country office.

Figure 11 shows the top 15 donors by expenditure. The United Kingdom stands as the largest source of non-core funding for census, followed by the European Commission. Donors listed in the chart are, in certain cases, the original source of funding (e.g. the UK) and, in other cases, indicate a multi-donor arrangement with an administrative agent.<sup>44</sup> In multi-donor funds, financial contribution is not attributed to a particular donor, but rather is pooled (in this case, to fund the census).

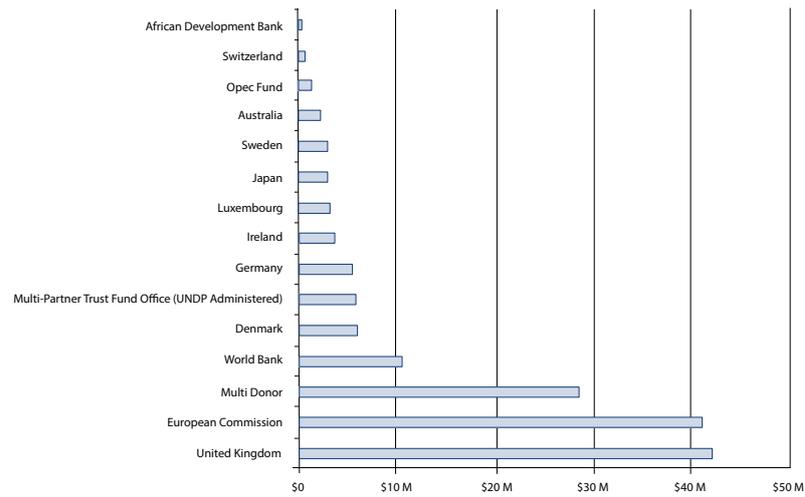
Figure 11 also shows that donor diversity is relatively limited. Moreover, resource mobilization and expenditure mostly takes place at the country level — only Luxemburg provides resources to fund the census at the global level.<sup>45</sup>

43 According to the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan, ability to finance is determined by gross national income per capita (as reported by the World Bank), using an average figure over the preceding three years. The need score is based on the following criteria: Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel; contraceptive prevalence rate (modern methods only); adult HIV prevalence; adolescent fertility rate; under-five mortality rate; maternal mortality ratio; literacy rate among 15 to 24-year-old females; and the proportion of the population aged 10 to 24 years.

44 The entity responsible for administering the funds received from the original source.

45 See the Atlas portfolio of interventions in Volume 3 of the Evaluation Report.

Figure 11. Top 15 donors (non-core funding sources) of census by expenditure (2005-2014), in USD



Source: Atlas Data January 1, 2005 – December 2014, generated at UNFPA headquarters and, in some cases, by country offices.

### 3. Main findings and analysis

**Evaluation question 1. To what extent was UNFPA support aligned with partner government priorities and national, regional and global needs on the availability and use of data on the one hand, and UNFPA policies and strategies on the other?**

Summary of Findings:

Relevance

**The 2010 census round was a priority for the majority of governments of programme countries with which UNFPA partnered. UNFPA support to the 2010 census round was highly relevant and strongly aligned with government priorities, plans, strategies and needs for the availability of broad and accurate data.**

**UNFPA support on data availability was also aligned — albeit to varying degrees — with the needs of other stakeholders, including civil society, academia and the media.**

**However, actual support for the use of data in planning, policy development, programming, national-level monitoring and evaluation as emphasized in the most recent UNFPA strategic plans is not, as of yet, fully conveyed into operational action plans.**

*Alignment of support to the 2010 census round with partner government priorities on the availability and use of statistical data*

In a majority of the countries analysed, **UNFPA support to the 2010 census round was strongly aligned with government priorities, plans, strategies and needs in statistical data.** This was confirmed by the NSOs and ministries in all six case study countries visited for the evaluation as well as in the seven countries for which an extended desk review was conducted.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, a large majority of respondents to the NSO survey (see annex 12, summary results of the survey) believed that one of the strengths of UNFPA support was the thorough needs assessment conducted prior to the census — a proxy indicating strong alignment.<sup>47</sup>

A review of country programme documents of the countries studied reveals that UNFPA country offices incorporated outcomes and outputs related to the population and development component of the UNFPA mandate. In addition, the country programme document review revealed that UNFPA referred to national needs for the production of high-quality data for planning, policy development and monitoring of

progress towards key social and economic indicators.

This was confirmed by several country programme evaluations, including, for example, the evaluations of Mongolia and Tajikistan. The Mongolia country programme evaluation states: “UNFPA support in terms of disaggregation and utilization of data for policy and planning is highly relevant to the State Population Development Policy, the MDG-based comprehensive national development strategies and other sectoral policies and programs.”<sup>48</sup> The Tajikistan country programme evaluation states: “the UNFPA close collaboration with the Statistical Agency [...] in particular the Population and Housing Census, can help overcome important institutional limitations and contribute to effective policymaking.”<sup>49</sup>

**Several factors explain this alignment.** First, UNFPA support is based on an ongoing and **long-standing cooperative relationship**, as well as an analysis of overall needs conducted prior to the development of

46 The six countries visited for field case studies were Peru, Mauritania, Myanmar, Palestine, Tajikistan and Kenya. The seven countries of the extended desk review were Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Cameroon, Indonesia, Iraq and Rwanda.

47 31 NSOs among 53 respondents to the NSO survey considered that one of the strengths of the UNFPA support was the thorough assessment of needs conducted prior to the census.

48 Evaluation Report of the UNFPA Fourth Country Programme (2007-2011) of Assistance to Mongolia, 2010, p.16.

49 Country Programme Evaluation UNFPA Tajikistan Country Programme 2010-2015 Evaluation Report, November 2014, p. 40.

each annual programme. As reported by the President of the Institute of Statistics of Peru (INEI), over “the last 20 years, UNFPA has been working with the institution: every year a work plan is developed and made available to decision makers and researchers.” This is possible because UNFPA has offices in countries and can develop relationships with government officials on a long-term basis. Illustrating this, the President of the Palestine Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) highlighted that UNFPA is “not only acting as a donor or sponsor, but as a true partner, sharing detailed strategies and working together to build the overall system.”<sup>50</sup>

Secondly, **flexibility** is also important. Stakeholders mentioned annual work plans as an opportunity to regularly revisit needs, allowing for adaptation when needs and/or environments change. For example, the adaptability, inclusiveness and responsiveness of UNFPA were rated as especially relevant given the highly unstable political and security context of Palestine. The Palestinian census is seen as a key aspect of nation-building as well as fulfilling the need for coherent national planning (which has been developed over the post-census period). In Peru, as well, ministries and CSOs highlighted the UNFPA country office capacity to respond to new requests each year, including, for example, requests to support new surveys.<sup>51</sup>

Third, UNFPA support is **systematically aligned with national strategies related to development, poverty reduction and the generation of statistics**. In Kenya, for example, NSO officials stated that UNFPA support was relevant to their 2008–2012 strategic plan, which outlined priorities to be addressed over the census and post-census period.<sup>52</sup> In Palestine, UNFPA support was aligned with the national sectoral plan, which integrates the strategies of 23 ministries as well as numerous data collection plans in health, migration, humanitarian assistance and gender-based violence. In Peru, UNFPA plans for the period were also aligned with the needs around the availability and use of statistical data at regional and local level as outlined in the country programme document 2006-2010.<sup>53</sup> In Mauritania, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development stated that census data were needed to evaluate the development strategy of the last 15 years and to develop the post-2015 development strategy.

In all countries analysed,<sup>54</sup> **the support of UNFPA was aligned with the objectives of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)**. For example,

in Mauritania, UNFPA support to census was aligned with the NSDS priority of strengthening statistical-demographic capacity, including improvements to the availability of statistics and their use in public policies. In line with this, UNFPA also supported the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS 2007, 2011, and 2015) and Living Conditions Survey, both of which were based on the census sampling frame. UNFPA streamlined the statistical structures within line ministries and reinforced the implementation of their respective policies in line with their priorities and needs. For example, in Rwanda, UNFPA support was aligned with the NSDS I and II, themselves in line with partner government priorities. In Palestine, UNFPA support was aligned with the fourth strategic objective of the NSDS to develop, improve and expand subject matter statistics. Support was also aligned with an operational objective to define and implement a national strategy for censuses with a focus on assessing census quality. UNFPA support was also aligned with the Peru Strategic National Plan for the Development of Statistics 2008–2012; the annual work plans with national institutions are a direct response to the first strategic objective of the Plan.<sup>55</sup> However, as noted by Paris21,<sup>56</sup> UNFPA involvement in the development of national statistical development strategies has been limited, due, potentially, to its population-focused mandate.

**UNFPA support for census was also aligned to government priorities in conflict-affected and fragile contexts**. For example, in 2009, the government of Iraq sought international community support to enhance national capacities to plan and implement a high quality population census; UNFPA responded to this request.<sup>57</sup>

In Myanmar, UNFPA supported the census in response to a direct request from Myanmar authorities to the United Nations Secretary General. Since the onset of the democratic transition in 2011, and as stated in the national comprehensive development plan (“Myanmar Vision 2030”), the census has been one of the highest priorities of the Myanmar government.<sup>58</sup> A census had not been conducted for over 30 years, and the need for coherent population figures and socioeconomic data was essential to establishing reliable baselines for social and economic indicators, themselves required to draft, monitor and assess the impact of government strategies, plans and programmes at all levels and from all line ministries and agencies.

50 As reported by the President of INEI during the interview.

51 For example, in 2011, UNFPA supported the Youth Survey upon request of the National Secretary for Youth to prepare the National Strategic Plan for Youth 2012-2021.

52 KNBS, Strategic Plan 2008-2012. [http://www.paris21.org/sites/default/files/KENYA\\_StrategicPlan\\_2008-2012.pdf](http://www.paris21.org/sites/default/files/KENYA_StrategicPlan_2008-2012.pdf).

53 See paragraphs 72 and 74 of the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) 2006-2010.

54 Except Myanmar, where the NSDS was under development.

55 “To develop an information system that facilitates the monitoring and evaluation of national strategic programmes.”

56 As reported in the interview of a Paris21 representative.

57 Terms of reference of the Iraq Census Technical Advisory Board (ICTAB). 2009.

58 The census itself was also an invaluable input to Myanmar Vision 2030.

UNFPA support in Brazil was fully in line with the government strategy of South-South cooperation between Brazil and other Latin American countries, Lusophone Africa (Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa) and several other countries. UNFPA assisted the Institute of Statistics and the Brazilian Agency for Cooperation to set up a mechanism to transfer knowledge and equipment from Brazil to Lusophone Africa to conduct their census using the hand-held device technology developed by the Institute of Statistics (see Evaluation question 5).

Cameroon provides an example of how UNFPA support may be able to overcome the lack of government commitment towards the census (see Box 9). This example illustrates the strong UNFPA role in advocating for the collection of demographic data and for the conduct of population and housing census. It also demonstrates the respectful approach UNFPA takes *vis-à-vis* government decisions. In Cameroon, as highlighted in the independent country programme evaluation, “the existence of two separate major institutions with responsibilities on statistics – National Institute of Statistics (INS) and the Central Bureau for Census and Population Studies – has rendered many processes less efficient and more difficult to coordinate. As this was a sovereign decision of the Government, UNFPA has responded appropriately ... its support to both INS and the Central Bureau for Census and Population Studies has mitigated some of the inefficiencies inherent to this institutional arrangement.”<sup>59</sup>

#### Box 9. The example of Cameroon

In Cameroon, despite a lack of government commitment in favour of the census, UNFPA pushed strongly for the census and supported the Central Bureau for Census and Population Studies, which was established solely for the conduct of the census.

Regarding UNFPA support on data use, in many countries — even when set as a government priority — ministries have low capacity to analyse statistical data for policy planning. In response, UNFPA supported the production of thematic reports and a few local-level dissemination workshops, a narrow set of interventions. This highlights the **limitations of the demand-driven approach**, as governmental institutions may be less able to translate the need for increased analytical skills into well-defined activities.

In Palestine, UNFPA partners interviewed at Birzeit University noted the difficulties of creating sustainable systemic change through small-scale, periodic training opportunities. The training opportunities did not, at times, factor in the challenges faced by those working in underfunded public agencies without specialized statistical units or skilled managers or the stress experienced as a result of Palestine’s ongoing political, security and governance challenges.<sup>60</sup>

*Alignment of support to the 2010 census round with national, regional and global needs on the availability and use of statistical data (beyond government needs alone)*

In the majority of the programme countries analysed, **UNFPA support was strongly aligned with national needs beyond those of the government (e.g. the needs of civil society, academia and the media)**. Such needs included shaping the topics to be examined in the census, the presentation of census results, the capacity to analyse and use data for policymaking and the support to household surveys using the census sample frame (as further developed in Evaluation Question 2 and Evaluation Question 3). However, challenges remain, including access to detailed census results by researchers.

**UNFPA directly consulted a number of public institutions and civil society** to assess their needs and assisted governments in organizing civil society consultations. Through consultations on the preparation of the census questionnaire, UNFPA ensured that CSOs were able to provide inputs.

The financial and substantive involvement of UNFPA

within civil society consultations **supported the inclusion of specific topics raised by civil society within the census questionnaire**. For example, a special module on migrants and non-residents was included in the census questionnaire in Mauritania and a module on disability was included in the Mauritania and Palestine questionnaires.

In Mauritania, UNFPA ensured that potential data users were consulted during the development of the census questionnaire. In particular, UNFPA supported the inclusion of associations of disabled persons in these consultations; they had called upon UNFPA to advocate for the inclusion of questions on disability in the questionnaire.

In Kenya, the majority of non-governmental stakeholders interviewed noted a convergence of their needs with UNFPA involvement in the census process. With UNFPA support, the Kenya NSO conducted information sharing and consultative forums with

59 UNFPA Independent Cameroon Country Programme Evaluation. 2008-2011, p. 36. Evaluation Branch. Division for Oversight Services. New York. January, 2012.

60 Palestine country case study note, November 2015.

non-governmental stakeholders during the planning stages of the 2009 census. Though stressing that the scope, coverage and involvement of civil society in the census consultation process could have been more comprehensive, civil society organizations interviewed cited many examples of where 2009 census data enhanced their research, planning and programming.

In Palestine, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the media and consulting companies all affirmed the importance of UNFPA support to census, particularly given the significance of the use of census data for research and analytical purposes. UNFPA provided support for PCBS to conduct extensive national user consultations with a broad range of stakeholders during the census planning phase (2006 to 2007). A large number of workshops and activities were facilitated in all 16 governorates with local stakeholders and potential data users to provide input on topics for inclusion in the census questionnaire.

In Peru, the majority of non-governmental stakeholders interviewed affirmed the importance of the availability of census data to promote open governance and decentralization. They also noted convergence of their needs with UNFPA involvement in census planning as well as in supporting household surveys based on the census sample frame. According to CSOs and academia, UNFPA support to census in Peru was aligned with the needs of the country on data availability. UNFPA, for example, provided support to the introduction of the Male Health Survey to public debate; population projections based on the 2007 census; the use of census results to underscore gender inequality in access to school support; and the Regional Information System for Decision Making. The Regional Information System for Decision Making provides access to key, standardized local-level poverty indicators. This capacity development support was considered highly appropriate by the Round Table for Poverty Reduction.<sup>61</sup>

In Myanmar, the availability of census data is particularly important to improving the dialogue between civil society and the government within a transition framework. This occurred in parallel to an opening up of the government to more transparent and participative approaches. CSOs perceive the census to be an important building block to ensuring equal access to data and to developing social dialogue between civil society and national authorities. The census contributed to positioning civil society stakeholders as partners with a voice in the democratic transition process — a positive outcome, going beyond the need of data alone and supporting open public debates between government, civil society and academia. Similarly, academic institutions rely on census data, using it for education and research purposes.

In Tajikistan, UNFPA undertook various activities

to address media and policymakers' needs for improved knowledge of demographic indicators. For example, UNFPA organized a round-table meeting on preliminary census results with representatives of CSOs, mass media and government agencies. In addition, UNFPA trained mass media representatives on the basics of demography and the use of population indicators.

**UNFPA also worked to ensure that census questionnaires included information necessary to populate indicators in the ICPD and MDGs, including through advocating for the inclusion of questions on maternal mortality in some countries.** All studied countries included questions on school enrolment, disaggregated by sex (to produce indicators on primary education and gender gaps). In addition, all studied countries with incomplete death registration systems included questions on household mortality (used to estimate child mortality). Some countries (Indonesia, Myanmar, Palestine and Tajikistan) included a module to estimate maternal mortality.

There was also evidence that **UNFPA support to the census was aligned with the data needs of other United Nations agencies at the country and regional levels.** In Myanmar, for example, numerous discussions at United Nations Country Team (UNCT) meetings raised the need for census indicators. Additionally, many United Nations agencies participated in the National Advisory Committee and some directly assisted the census field operation. In Kenya, as in other countries, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) used census results for planning purposes, to produce biennial human development reports on Kenya and to analyse demographic trends (including trends in urbanization).

At the regional level, UNFPA work was aligned with the needs expressed by the statistical divisions of the United Nations regional commissions related to their interventions in support of the 2010 census round. The Statistical Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) emphasized the role of UNFPA in supporting its activities during the 2010 census round. A UNFPA-UNECE partnership has been established and has developed an annual work plan, which, according to UNECE, was responsive to changing contexts and needs. UNFPA regional and country offices supported many of the workshops and expert meetings organized by UNECE on census, in particular for the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and for Western Balkans countries.

In the Caribbean region, CARICOM highlighted that UNFPA-delivered training on demographic analysis addressed the need to prepare staff engaged in national-level census activities. The Director of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia explained

61 As reported by the Director of the Round Table for Poverty Reduction during the interview..

that the memorandum of understanding held with UNFPA provides the space to develop a plan of activities — supported by UNFPA — that address the needs of the Statistical Division in demographic statistics. Finally, the Population Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CELADE) stressed the strong partnership with UNFPA and the regular, joined work plan in response to the Commission's needs to support censuses in the region.<sup>62</sup>

**Despite efforts to support national needs on the availability of statistical data, several challenges remain.** Regarding the consultation process for the census questionnaire, there are some examples of stakeholder dissatisfaction at the omission of certain topics. For example, in Tajikistan, international migration was most often mentioned by informants to be missing in the census questionnaire, as it is the major way used by the Tajik population to cope with poverty. In 2007, migrants in Russia sent \$1.8 billion of remittances through official banks, representing 30 per cent of Tajikistan's GDP.<sup>63</sup> There is a stark

contrast between the importance of migration to the national economy and the almost complete lack of information regarding the number of Tajikistan citizens working abroad. The 2010 census could have been an opportunity to gather detailed information, but unfortunately this was not taken into account.

In Peru, national NGOs stressed that neither the census nor the surveys adequately reflected the issue of ethnicity.<sup>64</sup> The Ministry of Women and women's rights organizations underscored the sexist culture of the INEI and the gender-biased nature of the census. In Myanmar, some CSOs disagreed with the content of the census questionnaire and stressed that CSO consultations at an earlier stage could have increased the perceived relevance of the census. Additionally, certain sectors of Myanmar civil society — mostly those linked with international NGOs — raised strong doubts on the overall relevance and appropriateness of the census: they considered the census relevant from the point of view of statistical data needs, but quite risky from a sociopolitical perspective due to its ethnicity and religion questions.<sup>65</sup>

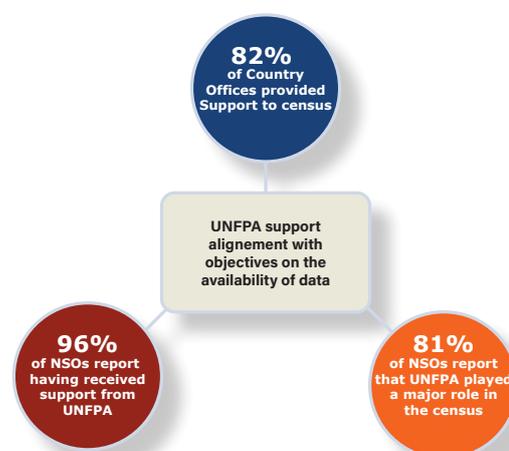
*Alignment of support to the 2010 census round with UNFPA policies and strategies*

**UNFPA planned support to the availability of data for the 2010 census round was largely aligned with UNFPA policies, frameworks and strategies of the time period.** However, support to increasing the capacity to analyse and use data for policymaking has not been, on the whole, a focus of UNFPA engagement.

Four global programmatic periods were in effect during the 2010 census round: the UNFPA Multi-year Funding Framework 2004–2007; the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2008–2011 and the Mid-term Review of the Strategic Plan 2012–2013; and the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2014–2017. All four strategic frameworks identified the need for the availability of demographic data for policy use, reflecting an increasing emphasis on the effective use of data for policymaking over time. This mirrors a shift in the UNFPA business model, from UNFPA directly providing technical assistance towards coordinating and brokering technical assistance and supporting South-South cooperation.

At the country level, UNFPA support was clearly aligned with objectives on the availability of data under each successive strategic plan, as confirmed

**Figure 12- Alignment to the objective of the availability of data**



during country visits (see Figure 12).<sup>66</sup>

In Peru, for example, UNFPA supported the censuses of 2005 and 2007. The 2005 annual work plan aimed to reinforce the capacity of INEI to conduct a population and housing census, while the 2006 annual work plan

62 Interviews with senior staff from the statistical divisions of the United Nations regional commissions.

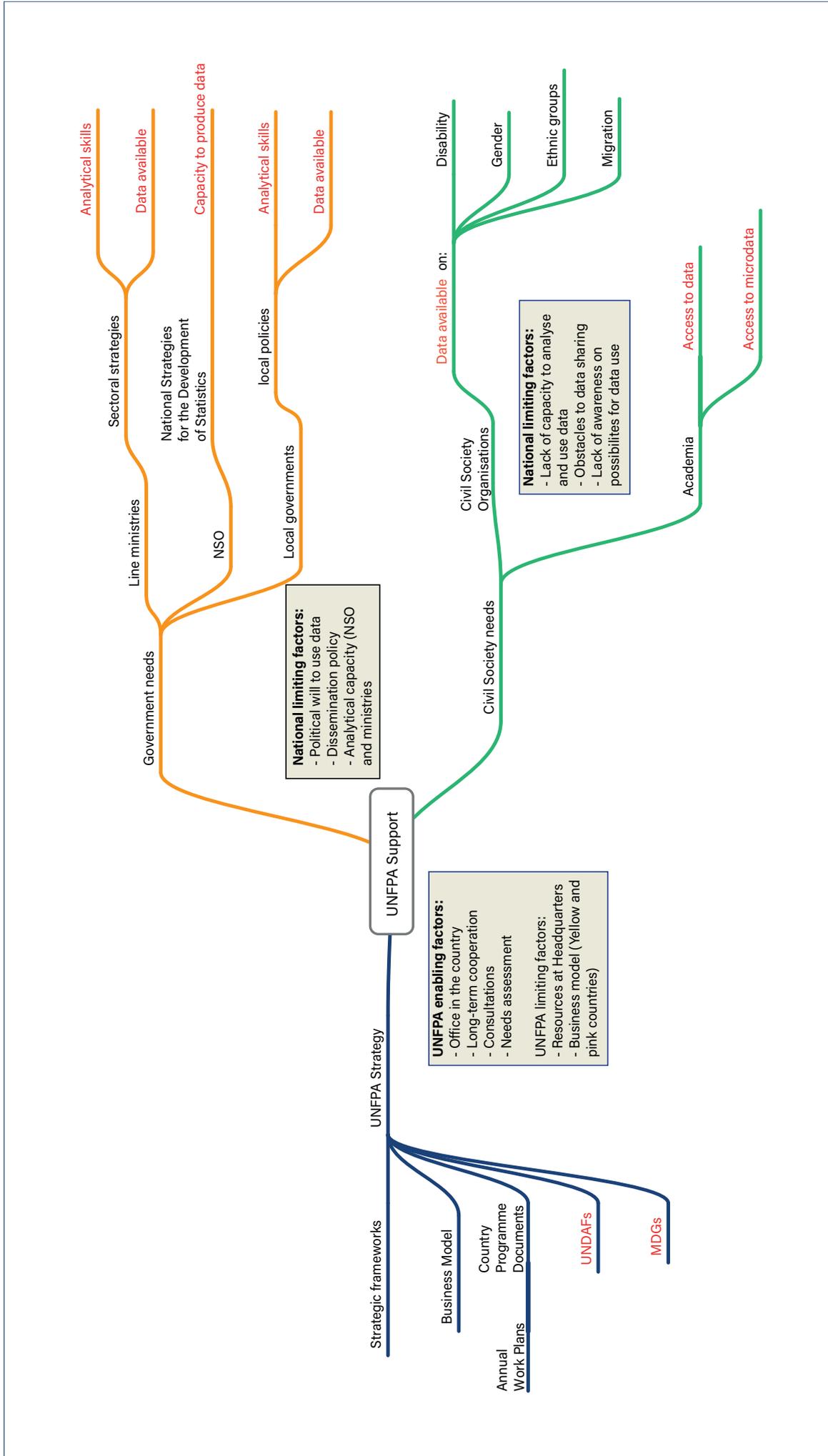
63 Melissa Kerr Chioyenda, Tajik Labour Migration to Russia: Tajik Responses to Migrant Vulnerability and Russian State Policies. The Eurasia Studies Society Journal Vol.2. No.1. February 2013, p. 2.

64 Civil society organizations working with indigenous communities and on Afro-Peruvian issues, and the Regional Government of Ucayali.

65 To these stakeholders (e.g. Burma Campaign UK, International Crisis Group), the costs and risks of the census outweighed the benefits.

66 Eighty-two per cent of UNFPA country offices surveyed by the evaluation reported to have provided census support; 96 per cent of respondents to the NSO Survey confirmed that UNFPA played a role in supporting the census, with 81 per cent noting that UNFPA played a major role.

Figure 13. Synthetic representation of UNFPA alignment to national needs



focused on ensuring that sociodemographic data disaggregated by sex was available, used to support the process of decentralization and the formulation of national and local-level development policies. Similarly, in Palestine, the annual work plans for the time period under review referred to strengthening the national data system, providing updated population data and enhancing national capacity to generate and utilize disaggregated data.

In Indonesia, support to the 2010 census was aligned with the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2008–2011. The 2011–2015 country programme action plans acknowledged that the 2010 Population Census had been designed to meet various data needs, including monitoring the progress for achieving the MDGs. The plans further recognized that the increasing importance of evidence-based planning and the call for transparency in policy decisions requires government agencies to increase their capacity to collect and analyse up-to-date sex-disaggregated data.<sup>67</sup>

UNFPA support in Kenya for the 2010 census round was clearly linked to the Multi-year Funding Framework 2004–2007, UNFPA Strategic Plan 2008–2011 and the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2014–2017. The 6th and 7th country programme documents, the country programme action plans and the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks during the period under evaluation aligned with specific areas of the Multi-year Funding Framework and the Strategic Plan 2008–2011, particularly in terms of support to the generation of national statistics and data generally as well as support to the census.

UNFPA has focused on technical, financial and advocacy support for the census process during the 2010 round. UNFPA Kenya support began in 2006, and has continued to the present (2015), with the largest input of resources and support occurring from 2008 to 2010. In Mauritania, support from the UNFPA country office for the implementation and dissemination of the census was in line with the corporate strategies covering the period from 2008 to 2017. The principle UNFPA strategy of engagement remains support to the development of national capacities. Annual work plans signed during the census period were in line with priorities determined by the UNFPA corporate framework. Support to the census in Myanmar is also aligned with the UNFPA strategic plan 2014–2017 and integrated into the UNFPA country programme document 2012–2015, along with the ensuing annual work plans. In Brazil, the UNFPA country programme was clearly aligned with the UNFPA strategy regarding South-South cooperation.<sup>68</sup>

UNFPA support to the use of census data has been more limited, in part because the census operation has been defined narrowly to include mostly support to the production and dissemination of data. Although support to census data production and availability was fully integrated in country programmes, **support to increasing the capacity to analyse and use data for policymaking has not been, on the whole, a focus at the country level.** This can be explained by the fact that support to the use of data became more prominent with the mid-term review of the strategic plan 2012–2013, and was thus taken into consideration in more recent annual work plans.

In most countries, UNFPA provided support to the analysis and use of data for policymaking. For example, UNFPA Peru supported the development of information systems within line ministries directly oriented to decision-making and supported the development of analytical capacities in ministries and NGOs. In Palestine, from 2008 to 2012, the UNFPA country office provided training to ministry staff on the use of statistical and census data. The impact of the training was, however, limited by the scarcity of skilled human resources at the ministries. Additionally, country offices in Peru and Palestine highlighted how the UNFPA country quadrant classification in which their country fell (pink for Peru and yellow for Palestine) limited the resources available to their country and narrowed the range of support that could have been provided to advocacy, policy-dialogue and advice. Providing technical assistance, necessary for the capacity development for line ministries and other stakeholders to analyse and use data in policymaking and monitoring, was not supported as a mode of engagement.

However, it is notable that in certain countries, such as Mauritania and Myanmar, few activities have been planned to develop the analytical capacities of the ministries to formulate and monitor evidence-based policies.

**The alignment of regional programmes with UNFPA strategic plans is less clear.** This is, in part, due to the fact that regional offices were reorganized in 2008 and decentralized to their respective geographical regions.<sup>69</sup> This led to a rethinking of the modalities in which technical assistance was provided: direct technical assistance to countries was primarily undertaken at the regional level, whereas the role of the Technical Division at headquarters shifted towards upstream work, via the compilation of best practices and the development of general guidelines and technical products.<sup>70</sup> During this period (2008 to 2009), the nine Country Technical Services Teams — teams that had

67 Country Programme Action Plan 2011 – 2015 for the Programme of Cooperation between the Government of Indonesia and the United Nations Population Fund, page 8-9. February 2011.

68 South-South Cooperation Strategy, 2011-2013, January 2011. Available at: <http://www.unfpa.org/admin-resource/policy-unfpa-South-South-cooperation-strategy>.

69 Decision of the Executive Board, 14 September 2007.

70 UNFPA Technical Division, Population and Development Branch, Activities developed under the Framework Agreement between the Government of Luxembourg and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in the area of Population and Development (“Demographic Evolutions”) 2008-2013.

previously provided technical backstopping to country offices and NSOs — were disbanded and merged with the regional offices. Two main functions related to the scope of this evaluation were assigned to the regional offices in the reorganization:<sup>71</sup>

- Knowledge management: Generate knowledge and studies on the regional situation and document and disseminate good practices.
- Technical Support:
  - Be the first port of call for all technical advice, liaising with Headquarters and other regional technical mechanisms as required;
  - Contribute regional experts for the consultant roster; and
  - Provide support and facilitate South-South and triangular cooperation through technical exchanges, conferences, identification of good practices and possible use of systems and methodologies.

The regional programme action plans 2014–2017 are aligned with the following objectives outlined in the corresponding global strategic framework:

- Support the capacity for production and dissemination of quality disaggregated data on population and development issues; and
- Support the increased availability of in-depth analysis of population dynamics and the capacity to use data to formulate, implement and monitor policies that integrate evidence on population dynamics.

**At the global level, during the period from 2004 to 2007, the Technical Support Division undertook several activities linked to the objectives of the Multi-year Funding Framework**, such as organizing an International Advocacy and Resource Mobilization meeting in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Division. The meeting brought together national policymakers and census officers, donor representatives, United Nations agencies and UNFPA technical and country office staff. The Technical Support Division also co-organized a regional workshop on the same theme of International Advocacy and Resource Mobilization for the 19 planned censuses in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>72</sup> In 2006, Technical Support Division conducted consultations with country offices and /CSTs at the inter-agency level, which helped define the role of UNFPA in data collection (including ensuring the measurement of key issues such as maternal mortality in population and housing censuses).<sup>73</sup> In addition, as was done for Africa in 2005, in Asia a regional workshop was organized that contributed to improving the capacity of select UNFPA country offices and countries for the successful implementation of the 2010 census round. In 2007, the Technical Support Division organized a regional workshop on preparatory activities, analysis and exchange of experiences in Panama. The report of the workshop was disseminated to country offices in order to increase their capacity in conducting censuses and to strengthen UNFPA involvement in data collection. The Technical Support Division also organized a special panel during the Global Forum on Gender Statistics on Producing Gender Statistics

**Table 13. Examples of alignment of regional programme action plans with the global strategic framework**

Regional Office	Examples of alignment of regional programme action plans 2014–2017 with the objectives of the corresponding global strategic framework
The Arab States Regional Office	The Arab States Regional Office plans to support the League of Arab States / Pan Arab Project for Family Health (PAPFAM) to provide technical assistance and oversight to countries planning and conducting family health surveys, including analysis and dissemination. <sup>74</sup>
The Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office	The Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office plans to commission in-depth analysis of data on relevant issues, such as ageing and vulnerable groups. <sup>75</sup>
The Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office	The Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office plans to develop knowledge management in order to generate evidence through in-depth analysis on population dynamics and aims to engage in advocacy and policy dialogue with Latin America and the Caribbean governments for the inclusion of population dynamics in the sustainable development goals formulated through United Nations intergovernmental processes. <sup>76</sup>
East and Southern Africa Regional Office	The East and Southern Africa Regional Office plans to partner with regional and global institutions to support in-depth analysis of available data for a better understanding of population dynamics. <sup>77</sup>
West and Central Africa Regional Office	The West and Central Africa Regional Office plans to build the capacity of regional, national demographic research and training institutions in data collection, analysis and use and to raise national and regional understanding of the linkages between sustainable economic development and the demographic dividend.

71 The terms of reference for regional offices. UNFPA internal document (undated).

72 Arab States Regional Office Regional Action Plan 2014-2017, p. 21.

73 2005 annual report of the Technical Support Division.

74 2006 annual report of the Technical Support Division.

75 ECA Regional Action Plan 2014-2017, p. 34.

76 Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office Regional Action Plan 2014-2017, p. 22 and 23.

77 East and Southern Africa Regional Office Regional Action Plan 2014-2017, p. 43.

through Population Censuses.

Whereas these activities were aligned with the Multi-year Funding Framework, it is notable that headquarters support to country offices primarily consisted of holding training or information workshops rather than providing direct training and solid documentation or selecting staff experienced in census to play key roles in the 2010 round. Additionally, no evidence was found of coordination between headquarters and the CSTs (in existence during this period).

**The Special Initiative on Census (SIC), launched by UNFPA in 2008 at the global level, was clearly aligned with the corporate strategy of support to the 2010 census round.** SIC intended to enhance the support provided through UNFPA country programmes by facilitating access to technical resources and training opportunities, by providing guidance on resource mobilization for population and housing censuses and by encouraging South-South cooperation across countries and regions.<sup>78</sup>

SIC activities related to the availability of census data and included needs assessments, inventory of available expertise on censuses, workshops, development of a website, development of standard business rules for data editing and various guides. During the period of activity of the SIC, UNFPA also collaborated with UNSD and UNICEF in the development of CensusInfo, a special desktop and Internet application to facilitate

the dissemination of population and housing census information.

SIC managed to do little on the use of data for evidence-based policymaking, as it focused its support on census conduct and evaluation.<sup>79</sup> Following its end in 2011, the Technical Division organized a series of regional needs assessment conferences on census analysis that supported discussion among countries on the use of census data to identify subnational vulnerabilities, requirements and disparities.<sup>80</sup> In addition, the Technical Division published two guides to help countries analyse census data: a guide on gender analysis of census data and a guide on population situation analysis. The guide on population situation analysis provides the basis for an integrated appraisal of population and reproductive health dynamics and their impacts on poverty, inequality and development. Nevertheless, the Technical Division's lack of human resources devoted to developing regional- and country-level capacity on the use of data for policymaking can be seen as an indicator of its weakness with regard to the alignment with the UNFPA strategy.

78 2011 global and regional work plan: support to the 2010 round of population and housing census. Special Initiative on census.

79 According to the interview of the former Director of the SIC.

80 2011 Annual report of the Technical Division.

**Evaluation question 2. To what extent has UNFPA support enhanced the capacity of NSOs to enable the production and availability of quality census data? To what extent is this enhanced capacity sustainable?**

Summary of Findings:

Effectiveness and Sustainability

UNFPA provided effective support for the 2010 population and housing census round. UNFPA was consistently recognized by United Nations agencies in the countries visited by the evaluation team as the lead agency in census support and demographic issues. UNFPA helped to create strong enabling environments at the country level via donor coordination, leveraging of funds and census advocacy. As a key partner, UNFPA played an important role in successfully contributing to increasing the number of programme countries where census took place.

UNFPA effectively contributed to increasing the capacity of NSOs to conduct and disseminate quality census data in accordance with international standards. However, UNFPA support was more effective for the production of data than for the dissemination of data.

In addition, in the absence of corporate guidelines and technical support (e.g. no internal training, few guidelines, no clear structure for internal technical backstopping), UNFPA work at the country level was highly dependent on the personal skills of its staff.

The sustainability of NSO enhanced capacity to conduct census is uneven due to external factors such as NSO staffing and turnover and the political will (or lack thereof) to develop statistics. To try to overcome these factors, UNFPA deployed a variety of strategies. However, these strategies were often tied to the production of census data, with limited attention to broader capacity development needs in NSOs, posing sustainability challenges.

*Enabling environment for the conduct of the census operation*

**UNFPA effectively contributed to enabling a favourable environment for the census by being involved in the census operation from its onset:** preparing project documents, advocating for the conduct of the census to the government, mobilizing resources from donors and, in some countries, establishing international advisory boards to bring in international expertise and recognition. In addition, UNFPA was particularly involved in discussions with civil society groups and supported publicity campaigns to mobilize the population.

**UNFPA played an important role in advocating for the census** by mobilizing governments for census preparation. This finding is confirmed by two-thirds of NSOs that responded to the evaluation survey, with Bangladesh and Kenya offering clear illustrative examples.

**UNFPA played a key role in resource mobilization** for census in roughly 50 countries (the majority of which were in Africa), convincing governments, donors and

international organizations to contribute financially. This is confirmed by 58 per cent of the respondents to the NSO survey who reported that UNFPA assisted with the mobilization of financial resources for the census; and 57 per cent of respondents to the country office survey reported undertaking resource mobilization for the census. All donors consulted in the six countries visited for the case studies viewed UNFPA as a guarantor in the census operation.

In specific political contexts, UNFPA involvement was critical to launching resource mobilization. For example, for the 2007 Palestine census, the UNFPA Executive Director initially provided one million dollars from a special fund that leveraged broader donor support and channelled assistance from United Nations agencies, Australia and OPEC. According to stakeholders, the active engagement of UNFPA in census created a favourable environment and assuaged donors that were reluctant to become involved due to the political context in Palestine.<sup>81</sup>

81 For example, Australia, which was unable to provide direct support to the census.

In contrast, despite efforts in Tajikistan to create an enabling environment by developing a fundraising strategy prior to the census, UNFPA was unable to convince external donors to contribute financially to the census. Donors involved in a World Bank project to strengthen the national statistical system of Tajikistan may have considered that they were already providing assistance to the statistical system of Tajikistan and were therefore not interested in supporting the census.

In some countries, **UNFPA played the role of fund manager**, tapping into its experience in financial management, procurement (in equipment and services in Peru), and direct payment of fieldworkers (in Myanmar). This was confirmed by key donors, such as DFID (one of the main donors in the 2010 round), underscoring that UNFPA has a strong added-value in terms of management of funds and procurement (see Evaluation Question 6).

In some countries (e.g. Kenya, Palestine, Mauritania, Myanmar and Tajikistan), **UNFPA directly financed publicity campaigns** to inform the public about the census and to promote participation. This was particularly useful in countries where violent post-election unrest, such as in Kenya, or controversial administrative operations, such as the biometric registration of nationals in Mauritania, could lead to confusion for the public and jeopardize the participation of the population in the census.

In addition, UNFPA, as a neutral body, **played a role of mediator in contexts of political conflict**, such as in Gaza when Hamas stopped the enumeration in December 2007 before it was completed. The UNFPA representative played a diplomatic intermediary role by participating directly in the negotiations, thus allowing enumeration to resume after a short delay.

Among the key factors for UNFPA success in creating an enabling environment for the census is that UNFPA was **involved in the census process from the beginning phases** in all countries analysed. In particular, UNFPA supported and, in some cases, directly drafted the census project document,<sup>82</sup> which describes in detail the census project, including methodology, organization and budget. The census project document is essential to presenting the project to potential donors and partners; over the past decade, UNFPA gained experience in preparing project documents. Sixty-eight per cent of respondents to the country office survey consider that preparation of the project document is a UNFPA strength; this was corroborated by the NSOs in the countries studied.

#### Box 10 Why an International Technical Advisory Board?

International Technical Advisory Boards have proven to be important census governance mechanisms; their establishment has not, however, been standardized among international institutions (e.g. UNSD, UNFPA, Eurostat) and there are no guidelines on how to approach the process.

However, no corporate guidelines on drafting project documents exist (only examples are made available to country offices); such guidelines or toolkits could help country offices to more efficiently and in a harmonized manner prepare the document.

Among United Nations agencies, **UNFPA was consistently recognized as the lead agency in census support and demographic issues**. This was acknowledged in all case study countries visited. For example, in Kenya, prior to and during the census, UNFPA developed relationships with other agencies both inside and outside the UNCT that helped to foster an environment conducive to mobilizing resources for census and providing strategic support to national partners.

UNFPA worked to ensure that the conduct of the census went smoothly and was not politicized, including within post-conflict contexts (as in Iraq) and in contexts in which a census had not been conducted for quite some time due to the political situation (as in Myanmar). In particular, UNFPA established an International Technical Advisory Board in Myanmar to offer advice from international experts and to provide a guarantee of compliance with international standards, including in the international monitoring of field operations (see Box 10).

There was no unique rule about the modalities of UNFPA participation in the International Technical Advisory Board. In Iraq, UNFPA decided to not chair the board in order to ensure separation between independent advice and technical assistance.<sup>83</sup> This principle was not applied in Myanmar, creating some confusion on messaging and management modes.

**UNFPA contributed to ensuring that CSOs were involved and consulted on their data needs**, in particular in the development of the census questionnaire.<sup>84</sup> For example, in Mauritania, Palestine and Peru, the active participation of UNFPA in

82 The census project document is the roadmap for the census operation. It describes the methodology used for the different stages of the census, the budget, the administrative structure and the time frame, and serves as source for support and resource mobilization for all processes of the census undertaking.

83 UNFPA asked the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division to chair the International Technical Advisory Board and the CTA performed as the secretariat of the board.

84 Evidence backing up this finding was found in the case studies and confirmed by the country office survey, where 54 per cent of country offices self-reported to have raised awareness on or advocated for the use of data by civil society.

the working groups in charge of discussing the questionnaire enhanced the transparency and credibility of the exercise. In Mauritania, UNFPA supported the inclusion of a question on disability proposed by associations of disabled persons. In Myanmar, where consultation was not a typical government practice, UNFPA pushed for and obtained a consultation committee, which included representatives of CSOs and ethnic groups. Though set up too late to play a genuine role in census preparations (as CSOs and ethnic groups lamented), the establishment of the committee itself represented progress.

Finally, **though UNFPA regional offices played a role in assessing country needs in some of the regions, support was uneven.** While the East and Southern

Africa Regional Office supported assessment in Africa, and the Asia and the Pacific Regional Office was strongly involved in the Myanmar census, the involvement of the Arab States Regional Office was minimal in Palestine. UNFPA support to census occurred primarily at country office level, with relatively low involvement by regional offices (except by country support teams, when they existed). Indeed, the results of the country office survey suggest that the role of regional offices was rather modest, as 80 per cent of country offices believed that regional offices should play a more active role in the 2020 round and provide better support to country offices in the region.<sup>85</sup>

### *Capacity of the NSO for the production and availability of quality data from the 2010 census round*

**UNFPA contributed significantly to increasing the capacity of NSOs to conduct and disseminate quality census data in accordance with international standards.** However, UNFPA support is stronger in the design, enumeration and data processing phases than for dissemination, analysis and quality assurance. In addition, in the absence of corporate guidelines, UNFPA support is highly dependent on the personal skill set of a given staff member.

In supporting population and housing censuses, **UNFPA made sure that the methodology was aligned with international recommendations** and, in particular, the United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses (adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2005 for the 2010 census round). Two-thirds of the country offices surveyed reported having advocated explicitly for alignment with international standards. UNFPA country offices assessed alignment with international standards in different ways: directly by the Population and Development Officer (Peru); seeking the expertise of the Country Support Team before it was dismantled (Palestine); by the Chief Technical Adviser (Mauritania); through the International Technical Advisory Board (Iraq, Myanmar); hiring experts as consultants (Kenya, Tajikistan); or by involving international organizations (Peru with CELADE). The assessment covered the topics to include in the questionnaire and their formulation, the methodology, the communication strategy and the evaluation.

In countries where census nomenclature and definitions did not align with international standards, UNFPA played a key role in advocating for alignment. For instance, UNFPA pushed to change the definition of the place of usual residence in Tajikistan to

conform to the internationally agreed definition. However, UNFPA was not always aware of the latest developments in international recommendations. For example, UNFPA country offices were not always aware of the recommendations of the United Nations Washington Group for the formulation of questions on disability. This was the case in Mauritania. In contrast, the recommendations were known in Myanmar.

In the countries visited by the evaluation team, there was a **general consensus that UNFPA successfully supported the NSO** or the institution in charge of the census for the preparation, enumeration and data processing phases of the census. According to NSO staff consulted during country visits, UNFPA support was essential to preparing and successfully conducting the census. Ninety per cent of respondents to the NSO survey reported that UNFPA provided technical assistance, advice or training; all considered that UNFPA successfully provided technical assistance (82 per cent considered UNFPA very successful). In Mauritania, the CTA provided by UNFPA during the preparation and implementation of the census successfully helped the NSO prepare for and conduct the 2013 census, bringing in experience and knowledge of international standards.

In countries with existing capacity, UNFPA focused on providing support to areas where the NSO specifically requested assistance. In Kenya, for example, UNFPA supported the use of geographic information system technologies and data capture. In Tajikistan, where the NSO had limited qualified staff at the onset of the census, UNFPA organized successful training sessions for IT-specialists on how to scan questionnaires, a course for census departments on how to provide instructions on and fill out questionnaires, and a course for mass

85 The remaining 20 per cent of the country offices considered that the level of support to the 2010 round was acceptable. In no case did country offices consider that support from regional offices was not needed.

media on how to generate public awareness of the 2010 census. In Peru, UNFPA support covered all phases of the census, from preparation to dissemination.

In terms of dissemination, UNFPA **supported the publication of census results** in all the country visited and more than 70 countries,<sup>86</sup> financing printing costs and, at times, supporting publication preparation. This was confirmed by 42 per cent of NSO respondents to the NSO survey who reported that support to publications was successful.

Beyond the publication of basic statistics, a census provides data that can be used to conduct in-depth analysis of various themes, such as education, economic activity, labour, gender and migration. Many countries include the publication of a number of thematic reports in their census dissemination plan. According to the country office survey and corroborated by the NSO survey, UNFPA supported the publication of thematic reports in around 55 countries. In addition to covering printing costs, UNFPA financed workshops to analyse the data with main stakeholders (as in the Republic of the Congo), coordinated data analysis (in Mauritania) and financed outsourcing of the analytical work (in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Myanmar).

Preparing thematic reports requires analytical capacities that many NSOs lack. For example, in Bangladesh, although a report of the initial census results was produced relatively quickly, thematic reports had not been published four years after enumeration, despite their need as inputs to the 7th National Plan 2016–2010. The main reason was the lack of NSO capacity to undertake analytical work.

**To overcome this lack of analytical skills, UNFPA deployed strategies that varied with country context.** UNFPA supported trainings on census data analysis for the statistical office staff in some countries (Niger, Timor Leste and Uruguay). UNFPA financed the outsourcing of the preparation of thematic reports. In Bangladesh, the 14 monographs have been subcontracted, primarily to national public academic and research institutions in an attempt to foster the transfer of knowledge and expertise. In Myanmar, UNFPA recruited a team of consultants to produce thematic reports immediately following enumeration. In other countries, UNFPA hired a CTA or a consultant to coordinate the production of the reports. In Mauritania, a team of analysts with diverse backgrounds (NSO, ministries and academia) was established and coordinated by the UNFPA CTA to draft the thematic reports. This allowed thematic reports to be published two and a half years after the enumeration.

However, **despite all these efforts, analytical capacity remains a challenge in many NSOs.** UNFPA did not succeed in ameliorating this in all countries supported

#### **Box 11. Dissemination strategies: insufficient user consultation**

In Kenya, academics interviewed expressed concerns about the 'traditional' and routine approach to packaging data, and believed much more could have been done. Similarly, NGOs deplored not having been invited to contribute to the definition of indicators.

In Mauritania, users were not involved in the preparation of the dissemination plan. In Myanmar, though the formal framework for consultations was in place, there were concerns on the quality of the interaction: The Department of Population, in charge of the census, informed users of decisions already made in terms of dissemination products rather than engaging in a dialogue, listening to their needs or incorporating their inputs. UNFPA could have supported a demand-driven approach for the dissemination plan.

in order to enable timely publishing of in-depth census analysis. This is a missed opportunity given that 74 per cent of the respondents to the NSO survey considered UNFPA to have strength in building analytical capacity, with the majority reporting that support in analysis or projection would be useful.

**UNFPA did not push enough for the development of dissemination strategies,** including for user consultations on dissemination needs. Consequently, the same products produced for the previous census (e.g. thematic reports, pre-defined tables) were proposed without evaluating their usefulness (see Box 11).

According to international recommendations:

“The statistical/census office should develop and implement an effective strategy for producing and disseminating output products and providing related services based on the demonstrated needs of the diverse users of census data. A number of key elements should be taken into account in the development of a strategy for census data dissemination, including: 1) identifying the diverse categories of users and their data needs/uses through consultation, 2) products to be developed, 3) the media of dissemination, 4) meta-data to aid in the interpretation of the results, 5) confidentiality and privacy measures, 6) assessing the required technologies to meet user needs, 7) dissemination policy, 8) quality assurance in terms of accuracy and timeliness, 9) available financial and human resources, etc.”<sup>87</sup>

A frequent observation made by country offices and

<sup>86</sup> According to the survey of UNFPA country offices conducted by the Evaluation Office in 2014.

<sup>87</sup> Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, rev. 3. Adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2015 for the 2020 round of Population and Housing Censuses.

echoed by Technical Division is that **there is a lack of systematic technical support by headquarters to the regional and country levels**: no internal training, few guidelines, limited information management and limited technical assistance (both from headquarters and, to a lesser extent, from regional offices). Minimum knowledge requirements are not set for Population and Development officers in country or regional offices, and a clear structure for internal technical backstopping is lacking. Consequently, UNFPA support depends essentially on individual capacities, including:

- Internal expertise, provided previously by the CSTs (which were dismantled during the 2010 round);
- Technical capacity of the CTA, as in Mauritania;
- Selection of consultants able to work in the country, taking into consideration issues of language and culture. In Myanmar, these issues were not adequately taken into consideration, which created difficulties in the smooth transfer of knowledge; and
- Personal skills of the UNFPA country representative (e.g. Palestine) or Population and Development Officer (e.g. Peru).

This lack of systematic technical support and guidance at the corporate level explains, to some extent, the challenges in ensuring the consistency of quality assurance approaches.

Evidence from case studies reveals that **UNFPA support to quality assurance of the census process was uneven**. In some countries it was very strong and integrated throughout all census activities (e.g. Mauritania, Palestine). In other countries, there was less evidence of a strict quality assurance process (e.g. Peru, Myanmar). Quality in statistics covers an array of dimensions such as relevance, accuracy, timeliness, clarity and accessibility. UNFPA paid great attention to relevance, making sure that the information collected during the census was relevant to various public and private stakeholders.

In several countries, a post-enumeration survey to estimate the coverage of the census was not conducted (see Box 12). Only 37 per cent of respondents to the NSO survey reported receiving training or technical assistance on post-enumeration surveys. In Myanmar, the technical capacity of the Department of Population was considered insufficient to conduct a post-enumeration survey, an undertaking that could have contributed to building trust in a country that had not conducted a census in 30 years and that did not have reliable demographic sources for comparison. In Tajikistan, the NSO did not follow the advice of UNFPA to conduct a post-enumeration survey. Instead, supervisors revisited all enumeration areas immediately after the census and checked 10

#### Box 12. What is a post-enumeration survey?

Accuracy of census results is measured in terms of coverage (did the census enumerate all individuals?) and content (did the data collected and processed reflect reality?). The recommended tool to evaluate the coverage and, to a lesser extent, the accuracy of responses, is a post-enumeration survey. A post-enumeration survey randomly selects areas of enumeration and independently re-enumerates the population in these areas. By comparing both samples (the census and the post-enumeration survey), both subject to error, a statistical model estimates the 'true' population and thus the coverage of the census.

per cent of all households in each area. This method, traditionally used in the former Soviet Union, is very costly and has no scientific basis.

In Kenya, anomalies, possibly linked to weak field supervision in eight districts, resulted in a court case that led to a national-level embargo on detailed census data and thematic monographs. A post-enumeration survey could have been used to estimate the under-coverage and correct the results accordingly. Unfortunately, the Bureau of Statistics of Kenya explained that the post-enumeration survey was not well prepared and could not be completed due to lack of proper technical assistance. The UNFPA country office acknowledged having insufficient technical knowledge and noted receiving inadequate backstopping support from the UNFPA regional or global levels.

It is important to note that **there are limits to the role of UNFPA that are not always well understood or appreciated by stakeholders**. The role of UNFPA as a United Nations agency is to support and advise partner countries on the census, but the programme country is responsible for making final decisions on census. UNFPA advises countries but does not impose its views or make its support contingent upon acceptance of its recommendations. This created difficulties in some countries where the government took decisions that were at odds with UNFPA recommendations.

In Myanmar, for example, the government decided at the beginning of the census enumeration to forbid an ethnic minority (the Rohingyas) to self-identify as such. This put UNFPA in a difficult position of continuing to provide support to the census. Despite issuing statements expressing concerns about the government's decision, ongoing support to the census gave rise to the perception that UNFPA was endorsing the decision. Less problematic cases were encountered when an NSO did not follow UNFPA technical advice, for example on the methodology used (the case for the 2005 Peruvian census) or on the way to process

the data (Palestine). In Indonesia, census data is not freely accessible for all users; due to Ministry of Finance regulations, census data is available at a cost for some users (private users and researchers). This is

a controversial issue in Indonesia, as it constrains the widespread and equal use of census data. The UNFPA country office has pushed for a change but with no success to date (as of 2015).

*Models of support for enhancing the capacity of the NSO in a variety of country contexts*

**The models of support UNFPA used to enhance the capacity of the NSOs were effective**, according to the NSOs and other stakeholders of the studied countries. In-depth interviews in case study countries revealed a recurring opinion by NSOs that the long-term approach to support by UNFPA is considered more efficient than discrete donor support. However, UNFPA often bases its support on the needs expressed by the NSO rather than on a thorough assessment of NSO capacity. This was suggested by the interviews of NSOs and country offices in studied countries, and by the absence of evidence of formal NSO capacity assessments.

In order to support population and housing censuses, **UNFPA used a mixed approach to support**, including: advocacy and policy dialogue — UNFPA advocated for the conduct of a census (referred to as ‘soft aid’); resource mobilization; procurement of goods and services; technical assistance provided by a long-

term CTA; ad-hoc consultancies by donors; technical support from South-South cooperation; study visits; and support to international or regional seminars.

Table 14 provides a distribution of the main modes of support by region as reported by the country offices. In almost all countries where census support was provided, UNFPA provided technical assistance (directly or indirectly), with long-term assistance provided by a CTA occurring in half of the African countries (mostly in the UNFPA red quadrant). UNFPA engagement in advocacy and policy dialogue is more heterogeneous. It was undertaken in around 40 per cent of the countries supported, although this percentage increased to 90 per cent in the West and Central Africa Regional Office region (where governments tend to face greater financial challenges in covering the cost of a census). Africa is also the region where service delivery (such as payment of enumerators or the procurement of equipment) was

**Table 14. Typology of UNFPA interventions**

Region	Advocacy-Policy dialogue	Resource mobilization	Technical assistance capacity building	Provision of CTA	Service providing	South-South cooperation	Number of countries supported
Asia and the Pacific	44%	38%	100%	13%	56%	31%	32
Arab states	31%	31%	92%	8%	39%	15%	13
Eastern Europe Central Asia	47%	20%	87%	0%	60%	20%	15
Eastern and South Africa	60%	73%	100%	40%	67%	13%	15
Latin America and the Caribbean	15%	8%	72%	0%	51%	15%	39
Western and Central Africa	89%	94%	100%	50%	89%	0%	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>132</b>

Source: UNFPA independent Evaluation Office survey, July 2014

Table 15. NSO opinions on UNFPA support to the population and housing census

How successful was UNFPA in its role to:	UNFPA Played a role (in %)	When UNFPA played a role, it was (in %):		
		Very successful	Somewhat successful	Not successful
Advocate to undertake the census	64	79	12	9
Provide financial support	81	62	31	7
Assist for resource mobilization	62	69	28	3
Provide technical assistance	79	81	14	5
Service delivery, including procurement	56	59	38	3
Promote South-South cooperation	46	92	8	0

Source: UNFPA independent Evaluation Office survey, July 2014

often utilized: around 90 per cent of the countries in Western and Central Africa and 60 per cent in Eastern and Southern Africa. Support to South-South cooperation was provided in only 18 per cent of the countries, with the highest support (31 per cent) in the Asia-Pacific region.

In countries where the NSO capacity was insufficient to prepare and conduct the census, due to high turnover of the staff (as in Mauritania) or to the long period of time since the last census (as in Myanmar), UNFPA recruited a CTA to coordinate the full operation. At least 20 countries, mostly in the UNFPA red quadrant,<sup>88</sup> benefited from a CTA.

This reflects the UNFPA business model adopted with the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan that determines the mode of engagement used by a country's need and ability to finance (see Table 2 in Chapter 1). Notably, capacity building was undertaken even in countries in the pink quadrant (generally exhibiting higher ability to finance and lower need), as is the case for most of the countries in Latin America and Eastern Europe. This was confirmed by UNFPA country offices in Colombia and Peru. The Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office reported that many countries, particularly in the Balkans, are in the pink quadrant but face serious challenges with statistics. The current country classification appears to more adequately reflect needs *vis-à-vis* census production than use of data. Indeed, there are important gaps in the use of data in countries that have good capacity to produce data.

This **mix of support was found to respond successfully to country needs vis-à-vis data production** by all countries visited during the evaluation as well as by the respondents to the NSO survey.

More than 90 per cent of NSOs considered UNFPA support (via any mode) successful (see Table 15).

In particular, UNFPA tailored its support to the level of capacity of the NSO and its requirement on a long-term approach, as highlighted in Evaluation question 1 on alignment. Countries prefer a long-term and consistent engagement to the more limited and targeted support provided by some donors (e.g. Bangladesh, Palestine, Peru and Mauritania).

**Some downsides were observed, such as the aforementioned lack of formal assessment of the capacity of the NSO or institution in charge of the census.** There is no corporate guidance on conducting such an assessment. As a consequence, country offices tend to adopt a demand-driven approach to determine the mode and level of census support rather than basing support decisions on a thorough assessment of country capacity and context. For example, in Kenya, the NSO requested only limited technical assistance, declining the suggestion of a CTA. On this basis, the country office assumed the capacity of the NSO to be sufficient and offered only light support. But after the enumeration, it emerged that the NSO needed technical assistance, particularly in the design and conduct of the post-enumeration survey to detect anomalies in data collection and to provide quality assurance.

Whereas procurement of goods and services is one modality of direct support, UNFPA has been requested to procure goods and services as a way to bypass national procedures (which can be lengthy), potentially putting UNFPA at risk. In Peru, for example, UNFPA undertook an extensive procurement operation under very tight timelines and within a politically sensitive context, and thus took on a high level of risk — a challenge it did not adequately address.

88 Bangladesh, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Togo.

## NSO capacity in the use of new technologies

UNFPA did not systematically undertake assessments of NSOs to establish the ability (or lack thereof) to absorb new technology, important for appropriately aligning and tailoring support. Despite this, UNFPA provided support (albeit modest) to NSOs in the use of new technologies, including handheld devices, geographic information systems for cartography, optical data capture and online dissemination tools.

The NSO survey revealed that although 77 per cent of NSOs reported using new technologies for census, only half of the countries received technical assistance in new technologies from UNFPA country offices (see Figure 14).

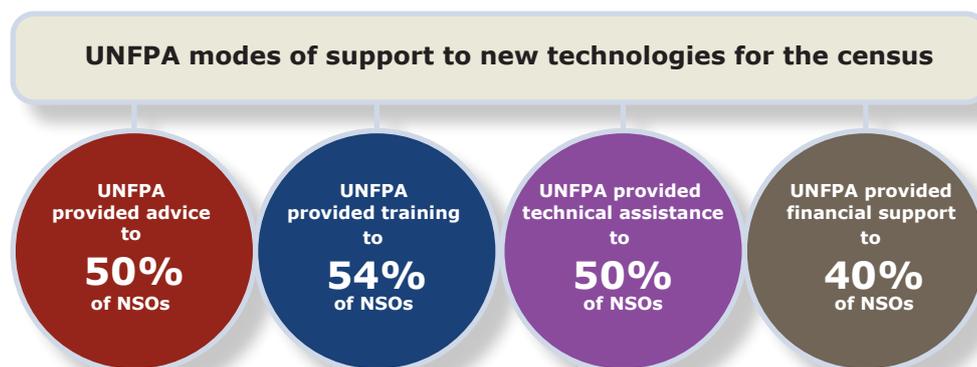
**UNFPA did not perform a systematic assessment of the needs and capacity of NSOs to absorb new technology.** In Mauritania, the NSO requested the implementation of the same web-based geographic information system dissemination system that was used in Morocco, but without expressing clearly the functionalities it needed. UNFPA provided a consultant to prepare the terms of reference, but did not encourage the NSO to specify their needs or their IT infrastructure, taking on the risk of supporting a project that was not well defined. It was significant that during the study visit to Mauritania, neither the NSO nor the UNFPA country office was able to describe

### Box 13. Examples of the use of digital cartography for the census

During the 2009 Kenyan census, the Kenyan cartography section built on the experience gained from the 1999 census, when UNFPA provided extensive financial and technical support for the establishment of a geographic information system at the Kenya NSO (KNBS). For the 2009 census, KNBS leveraged this experience and further expanded the system into a fully-fledged, stand-alone geographical analytical tool.

In Mauritania, UNFPA played a crucial role in the use of new technologies for the 2013 census. UNFPA organized missions of experts from Cape Verde to share their experience with the Mauritanian NSO on using geographic information systems to digitize existing topographic maps. These maps were completed by direct observation in the field and recorded on a PDA, supporting the development of a high-quality cartographic database, essential to the quality of the census. Other examples of UNFPA support to the use of geographic information system technology for the census were found in Rwanda (for the 2012 census) and Palestine (for the preparation of the 2017 census).

Figure 14. UNFPA modes of support to new technologies for the census



Source: NSO survey

Table 16. UNFPA support to the use of new technologies

New technologies most frequently supported:
<b>Digital cartography</b> (geographic information systems) and use of handheld devices (PDAs): in Myanmar UNFPA procured equipment and software (see other examples in Box 13).
<b>Optical data capture (scanning):</b> UNFPA brought (via the Egypt NSO), optical data capture technology to the Iraqi NSO, taking into account the capacity of CSOs to acquire this technology. Staff from the CSOs and the Kurdistan NSO were trained to be able to implement optical data capture on their own. Other examples of UNFPA support to optical character recognition technology were found in Bangladesh, Kenya, Myanmar, Peru, and Tajikistan.
<b>Web dissemination tools:</b> UNFPA supported the use of CensusInfo, an application jointly developed with UNSD and UNICEF, and supported the use of REDATAM, a dissemination tool developed in Latin America.

precisely the functionalities expected from the system and no technical specifications were provided. In contrast, in Tunisia, UNFPA requested an independent expert to assess the capacity of the National Institute of Statistics to use handheld devices for the 2014 census before providing support.

**There is a lack of knowledge management at the**

**corporate level for the use of new technologies, and there is no guidance provided to country offices in that regard.** As a consequence, UNFPA did not play a leading role in the use of new technology for the 2010 round. A UNFPA Senior Adviser reported, “if we are a population and census organization we should keep up with technology. Technology is changing very fast in the field of census and we do not have expertise.”

*Models of support for enhancing the capacity of the NSO to prepare for the 2020 census round.*

**The efforts UNFPA deployed to increase NSO capacity to conduct the census during the 2010 round were not always successful in building sustainable capacity for the 2020 round** due to external factors, such as high NSO staff turnover and a lack of political will to develop statistical systems. To overcome these factors, UNFPA utilized strategies such as organizing technical assistance as knowledge transfer and promoting systematic documentation of procedures. However, UNFPA support to statistical capacity building appears to be more short-term than long-term.

**Many critical factors hinder the sustainability of the capacity built in NSOs** for the conduct of population and housing censuses. Primarily, because censuses are usually carried out only once every ten years, **staff turnover is a major issue.** The staff involved in the previous census may have changed position in the NSO or left the office entirely. The Office of Statistics in Mauritania, for example, faced high staff turnover, as did Kenya and Bangladesh, where (as in many developing countries) salaries in the public sector are unattractive and the private sector tends to recruit experienced staff from public institutions. Conversely, capacity generated by UNFPA support was sustained in NSOs with low staff turnover. In Palestine, for example, UNFPA had supported the capacity of the then-newly formed Office of Statistics (PCBS) for the 1997 census. Staff involved in the 1997 census stayed in PCBS and took on greater responsibilities for the 2007 census (involving newer staff as well) to transfer knowledge and keep the momentum. Turnover is also low in Peru, with the INEI building sustainable capacity over the years.

Another factor is that **government and donor financial support to the census tends to focus more on enumeration** and less on phases prior (i.e. preparation for) and subsequent to enumeration, including data dissemination and use. The result is a lower focus on strengthening the capacity of the NSOs with a long-term view, hindering prospects for sustainability.

A third external factor impacting sustainability is

the typically **tight time frame available for census preparation**, particularly when resource mobilization takes a long time, delaying the final decision to undertake the census and shortening the time period for preparation. Frequently, in these situations, a team of external consultants is hired to undertake the majority of census preparation. Subcontracting is, at times, seen as a missed opportunity to build sustainable NSO capacity (as seen in Myanmar), and particularly analytical capacity (as seen in Bangladesh).

To face these challenges and to build sustainable capacity, **UNFPA successfully deployed various coping strategies during the 2010 round:**

- Developing capacities that can be used for other statistical operations (e.g. surveys, population projections). For example, in Iraq the capacity to use optical data capture was developed for the census (which was not conducted), but is routinely used to capture data for other statistical surveys. Half of the countries reporting to have used new technologies for the census are still using them on a regular basis. General capacity in, for example, questionnaire design or analysis, is used even more frequently in surveys conducted after the census. Staff in more than 90 per cent of the NSOs that responded to the survey use skills acquired through UNFPA support.
- Developing documentation: Prior census experience in a country is very useful in the preparation of a forthcoming census. Because of the lapse of time between censuses and the likelihood that experienced staff have left the census office, it is essential to document — in detail — how the census was planned, organized and conducted.<sup>89</sup> UNFPA emphasized the importance of documenting census operations and, in some countries, developed a system to manage census and (more generally), survey documentation. For example, in Mauritania, the CTA engaged dynamically with NSO staff, stressing the importance of documenting the operation for the next census.<sup>90</sup> As a result, the complete census documentation is being integrated into a toolkit developed by the International Household Survey

89 United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses: the 2020 round, p. 177.

90 This was confirmed by NSO staff during the evaluation.

Network to document and archive surveys.

- Performing technical assistance as knowledge transfer, including training and teamwork: For example, in Myanmar, technical support was implemented following a learning-by-doing approach, allowing transfer of know-how whenever possible and to the maximum extent feasible. In Mauritania, the CTA organized a team to work with, taking care to pass on experience and knowledge.
- Creating a pool of national consultants: In Kenya, UNFPA provided technical assistance via national consultants contracted on demand for specific, targeted, short-term inputs (e.g. evaluating cartographic capacity, cartographic training, communications adviser, compilation and tabulation assistance). This is considered a contributing factor in maintaining national capacity because there is strong continuing cooperation between these regular consultants and the NSO to support institutional memory building.
- Beginning preparations for the next census immediately after the previous one ends: In Tajikistan, working groups on the questionnaire for the 2020 census are established and skilled staff are outlining the process, preparing consultations with stakeholders and reflecting upon potential innovations to be used in the next census. This approach makes good use of the intercensal period, supporting sustained capacity and investigating new technologies and methodologies to prepare the 2020 census more efficiently.

**However, these coping strategies are rather uneven and not part of a systematized toolbox of possibilities or well documented at corporate level.**

In countries where UNFPA developed a long-term follow-up plan, NSOs show more sustainable capacity. This is the case in Palestine, where UNFPA was heavily involved in supporting the 1997 census and accompanied the strategy of the PCBS to maintain the capacity in-house, providing adequate technical assistance. As a consequence, support needed for the 2007 census was much lighter. The same was observed in preparation for the 2017 census; UNFPA is supporting South-South cooperation to bring the technology of handheld devices for data-collection in the PCBS.

Nevertheless, **UNFPA support to statistical capacity building appears to be more oriented towards the short-term.** In Bangladesh, for example, there is very high staff turnover and a lack of statisticians. The absence of a UNFPA long-term capacity development

strategy has been stressed by donors as an impediment to building sustainable NSO capacity. The analysis of the annual work plans of many country offices shows that supporting activities are mostly planned on an ad-hoc basis rather than integrated into a long- or mid-term strategy. NSO long-term capacity can be better built within the framework of a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)<sup>91</sup> and by considering the whole spectrum of statistical activities, rather than focusing on specific operations alone (such as population and housing censuses or demographic surveys).

However, the UNFPA mandate is limited to population dynamics, reproductive health and gender and human rights. Though UNFPA contributes to the development of statistical capacity, including through support to census, statistical capacity building remains the responsibility of the entire United Nations system and requires greater coordination among United Nations agencies.

Analytical skills are typically capabilities that need to be built over the long-term, and this is an area in which UNFPA has been less successful in building sustainable capacity. Country offices also expressed the need for a more active role of the regional offices in supporting data analysis.<sup>92</sup>

91 An NSDS is expected to provide a country with a strategy for developing statistical capacity across the entire national statistical system. The NSDS provides a vision for where the national statistical system should be in five to ten years and sets milestones for getting there. (Source: Paris21).

92 This was pointed out by one-third of the respondents to the country office survey, who requested a greater role of regional offices for the 2020 round.

**Evaluation question 3. To what extent have UNFPA-supported interventions contributed (or are likely to contribute) to a sustained use of population and housing census and other relevant demographic and socioeconomic data in the evidence-based development of plans, programmes and policies related to the UNFPA mandate at the national and decentralized levels?**

Summary of Findings:

Effectiveness and Sustainability

UNFPA support featured an array of activities conducive to generating an enabling environment for the use of data (advocacy and policy dialogue, support to dissemination of census results and focus on the production of credible data). Despite these efforts, the establishment of a fully favourable environment for the actual use of census-related data was hindered by weaknesses in data dissemination tools, difficulties in accessing census data and, in some countries, untimely release of census results.

Evidence revealed that a wide range of plans and programmes related to the UNFPA mandate are using census data, yet examples tend to relate to diagnosis and general contextual information — there is scant evidence that census data has been integrated into policymaking processes. UNFPA-supported capacity development activities did not translate into concrete actions for the use of census data for a number of reasons. Not tapping into the full potential of census results for use in programme design and policymaking reduces the value for money of census for all stakeholders.

UNFPA had a clear positive role in strengthening national leadership and ownership of the census by encouraging participation and engagement of all relevant national stakeholders in census processes (though with a focus on the central government).

In-country consultation has been uneven across stakeholder groups. The absence of corporate guidance on minimum standards for census governance mechanisms has contributed to this.

*Enabling environment for the use of data*

The United Nations Principles and Recommendations state the following regarding the use of census data: “The main purpose of a census is to collect, process and disseminate information that will be used as the basis of informed, evidence-based decision-making. The benefits of this approach to decisions are not always apparent to users, especially in situations where other approaches may have been used in the past. It is therefore important to promote such uses of census results among users.”<sup>93</sup>

In line with this principle (and as illustrated in Chapter 2), subsequent UNFPA programmatic frameworks focused increasingly on the use of data for evidence-based policymaking over the period from 2005 to 2014, covering the 2010 round of censuses. However, as discussed in this section and in Evaluation Question 4, this prominent programmatic focus on the use of data did not fully translate into actual support. Rather, support remained predominantly focused on production and availability of census-related data rather than on analysis and use for policymaking.

**UNFPA support included an array of activities to generate an enabling environment for data use.** UNFPA support focused on the production and availability of credible, good quality, relevant and comparable census data, precondition for use; it encompassed advocacy and policy dialogue to raise awareness on the importance of data use for policymaking; it featured support for the dissemination of census results; and support for NSOs to analyse census data, training to staff of ministries on how to use data and support to organizations dealing using population statistics. Despite these efforts, the contribution of UNFPA to an enabling environment for data use was insufficient. However support to the availability of census (and survey) data corresponding to national needs and in **compliance with international standards was clearly successful.**

Long-standing UNFPA support to NSOs contributed to the recognition by national authorities and stakeholders of the quality of statistical information in the country and gave **credibility to census data**, which is a crucial

93 Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, rev. 2, page 251, 2008, New York.

factor to legitimizing its use in policymaking and advocacy. This was observed in most of the countries visited, including particularly Mauritania, where few departments or other public authorities have internal statistical services and therefore rely on the NSO to obtain needed statistical information. In Palestine, UNFPA support to the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics contributed to increased government and civil society recognition of the census as an essential cornerstone of the national statistical system. It also encouraged key stakeholders to use census and other statistical data to the extent possible given the constraints of the current institutional context.

The credibility of data produced by NSOs is highly dependent on the level of democratic governance of the country and independence of the statistical institutions, two determining external factors that may influence the actual use of data.

Beyond the availability of good quality census and survey results, UNFPA made deliberate efforts to contribute to a favourable environment for the use of data **through advocacy and policy dialogue**. Country offices have used advocacy to raise awareness on the importance of data use for policymaking: 88 per cent of country offices that responded to the survey reported carrying out advocacy activities on the use of data, with indications of satisfactory performance: 64 per cent of NSO survey respondents consider that UNFPA features a strength in advocating for data use in policymaking. Advocacy efforts for data use, however, have overwhelmingly targeted ministries: nearly all country offices reported targeting their advocacy efforts to national authorities; only 59 per cent reported targeting civil society.

Another activity conducive to creating an enabling environment for data use was the **organization of dissemination workshops**. In some of the case study countries analysed, following the release of census data UNFPA sponsored a series of workshops to disseminate the main census findings at the national and decentralized levels (e.g. Mauritania, Palestine, Peru). The workshops not only presented key results of the census, but also informed potential users on the availability of census data. In Palestine, according to both the NSO and the country office, these workshops had strong multisectoral participation and offered a good opportunity to showcase the potential of census data to a variety of users.

In Peru, workshops revealed that potential data users, particularly those from CSOs, often do not know where to find data, do not know how to use it or how to interpret data correctly. This hints at some of the factors that contribute to the disconnect between the dissemination of data and its use in policy making. In Indonesia, where UNFPA supported the NSO in a

large number of workshops on the use of statistics in the regions, statistics use is widespread at the national level yet very low at the provincial and district levels.

UNFPA also supported the **development of NSO capacity to analyse census data**, particularly in producing analytical thematic reports, for example on topics related to the UNFPA mandate (e.g. gender, youth, disabilities). This contributed to a favourable environment for the use of data beyond mere availability of raw census data. For ministries staffed with skilled statisticians, the thematic reports that UNFPA supported were considered useful in their field of operation, with some ministries attempting to conduct cross-analysis (such as population and health in Palestine). In some countries, UNFPA went further than supporting the development of thematic reports. For example, in Indonesia, UNFPA funded a series of studies on population dynamics that contributed to a favourable enabling environment for the use of census data — these studies were actually used in the preparation for the 2015–2019 National Medium-term Development Plan.

In Indonesia, UNFPA played an important role as ‘enabler’ in the analysis of the census results. UNFPA funded several meetings that brought together groups of experts (policymakers and demographers) to discuss the results of the census, evaluate the quality of the data and agree on the thematic reports to be produced. This example illustrates the possibilities of UNFPA as a convener to promote the use of data, complementing capacity development for use.

In some countries, UNFPA also provided **training to ministry staff on how to use data**. In Palestine, UNFPA worked through both the Ministry of Planning and Birzeit University to support a series of trainings to ministries on the use of statistical and census data. UNFPA trained both professors and public health students in the use of census data for research purposes.<sup>94</sup> According to the views of line ministries and academia, these activities all appear to have contributed to a favourable environment for the use of census data. In Peru, the country office delivered capacity development courses on the use of census data to regional and local government staff: 600 people have been trained so far, and users interviewed perceived these contributions as appropriate and of good quality. In Myanmar, where the census was conducted in 2014, UNFPA launched a call for proposals in November 2014 to support capacity building of local CSOs on the use of census data. Thirty-six organizations were awarded funding to implement their project proposals.<sup>95</sup>

To foster the use of statistical information, **UNFPA supported organizations dealing with statistics**. In Palestine, for example, UNFPA supported the

94 UNFPA Country Office Annual Report for 2009, 2010 and 2011.

95 These organizations represent community-based organizations and local not-for-profit organizations (mostly NGOs).

establishment of a National Population Committee, which began to work on the development of a national population policy.<sup>96</sup> In Peru, UNFPA supported the dissemination and analysis of demographic data (including census-related data) by actively participating in several working groups of the Poverty Reduction Round Table (Mesa de Concertación para la Lucha Contra la Pobreza). These working groups focus on issues of sexual and reproductive health, demography, demographic change and public policies on older adults. In Kenya, UNFPA supported the National Council for Population and Development. This parastatal organization, with representation from a wide cross-section of national stakeholders, focuses on the analysis of larger demographic trends in society, including in the area of reproductive health. UNFPA provided funding to the National Council to investigate the effects of the so-called demographic dividend and the consequences, possibilities and policy implications this holds for national development.

Notwithstanding these efforts and activities, in many countries **a number of limiting factors hindered the establishment of a fully favourable environment for the use of data for policymaking.** The factors included weaknesses in dissemination tools, untimely release of census results (in some countries only), and difficulty in accessing census data, especially microdata.<sup>97</sup>

The **widespread dissemination of census** data is a necessary condition for the use of data for evidence-based policymaking. However, as discussed in Evaluation Question 2, the UNFPA support to dissemination workshops have not, on the whole, been shaped through extensive user consultations to fit their specific needs. A review of the available data on NSO websites in the countries covered by the field or desk studies showed that in most cases, only Excel tables or thematic reports were made available. In most cases, data are organized by source instead of thematic focus, obliging data users to work in silos, with limited opportunity for the cross-fertilization of data.

Country case studies underscored that the **untimely release of census results** has, in some cases, compromised data use.<sup>98</sup> Delays in data release often render data out of date and may contribute to a decline in the quality and accuracy of the data and in user interest. Therefore, timeliness in publishing census data is an important aspect of census quality. In Kenya, census data were published long after data collection took place due to a court case against the release of census data. Many now consider the data outdated. In

#### Box 14. Obstacles to the further use of statistical data in Indonesia and Bangladesh according to stakeholders

- Data access is limited
- Access to raw data is expensive
- Raw data analysis requires excessive work
- Data access is not user-friendly
- State regulations limit access and data processing

Tajikistan, the delayed publication of census results led some ministries to use data from the previous census or surveys; this data is likely outdated, undermining its accuracy and usefulness in policymaking. In Bangladesh, the lack of NSO capacity in dissemination and analysis resulted in delays in the overall census project, which hindered the full use of the census-based thematic reports for national development planning.

In both Kenya and Tajikistan, UNFPA was unable to mitigate the effects of the delayed release of data. In Bangladesh, the effectiveness and sustainability of UNFPA support to the census was hampered by the difficult context: the thematic reports of the census 2011 were released only in 2015, four years after the census. As a consequence, the National Sustainable Development Strategy of Bangladesh,<sup>99</sup> released in 2013 at a time when the results of the census 2011 should have been available, includes only preliminary census results related to population size and growth in urban and rural areas.

**Difficulty in accessing census data** beyond predefined tabulations also undermines a broader and more systematic use of census data. This encompasses specific tabulations made by the NSO upon request and also access to microdata for self-tabulation by end users. Microdata enable stakeholders (such as ministry staff, experts and researchers) to carry out in-depth analysis and projections. Limitations in accessing census microdata can happen for several reasons: legal or financial constraints (as in Indonesia or Tajikistan), lack of NSO capacity to provide the service (as in Mauritania), or lack of transparency in the priority given to such requests. Stakeholder questionnaires underline that they face a range of obstacles hampering the use of data, as illustrated in Indonesia and Bangladesh. In these two countries, where census-related data users were surveyed, a set

96 Support for the formulation of national population policies is part of the broad United Nations system mandate as described by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in their annual world population policies report. For more details on the content and purpose of these policies, see <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/policy/world-population-policies-2013.shtml>.

97 Microdata are individual anonymized data that allow cross-tabulations of all variables present in the database.

98 Bangladesh National Sustainable Development Strategy (2010-2021). Planning Commission. Available at: <http://www.plancomm.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/National-Sustainable-Development-Strategy.pdf>

99 Bangladesh National Sustainable Development Strategy (2010-2021). Planning Commission. Available at: <http://www.plancomm.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/National-Sustainable-Development-Strategy.pdf>

of factors hindering further use of census data have been identified that underscore the difficulty for users to access and analyse the census data (see Box 14).<sup>100</sup>

Finally, there is also **no regional strategy on census data use**. The role of the UNFPA regional offices in census has varied, but in general has been rather

modest. The evaluation team did not find evidence of systematic and consistent regional support to the generation of an enabling environment for data use. The main reason (addressed in Evaluation Question 4) is that most regional offices are programme implementers rather than advisers to country offices.

*Effective support for enhanced capacity for the use of data in the development and implementation of plans, programmes and policies related to the UNFPA mandate at the national and subnational levels (sexual and reproductive health and rights, youth, gender equality, population dynamics).*

Evidence from country studies demonstrate that a wide range of plans and programmes targeting youth, gender equality and sexual and reproductive health (including maternal mortality) are using census data. However use is mostly related to diagnosis and information and **very little evidence shows that census data has been integrated into policymaking processes**.

#### **Use of statistical information related to the UNFPA mandate:**

1. **Population policy:** The Kenyan Ministry of Health used the census to develop the new population policy aimed at reducing fertility and maternal mortality, life expectancy and other reproductive health measures. In Myanmar, the Statistics Department at the University of Yangon will use census results for analysis of different population policy-related issues such as fertility, nuptiality and population projections. In Indonesia, census data is used extensively in the National Mid-term Development Plan 2015–2019. The Plan includes population growth data as well as information of the structure of the population (based on census 2010 data). The population chapter covers an analysis of the demographic dividend based on projections developed using 2010 census data.
2. **Reproductive health:** The Mauritanian Ministry of Education used census data on parental education levels to target schools in vulnerable areas to conduct prevention campaigns on sexual health.
3. **Gender:** The Kenyan Ministry of Gender used specific data from the census for the policy framework and legislation regarding female genital mutilation. In Peru, the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations used census data to prepare the Law on Equality of Opportunities (Ley de Igualdad de Oportunidades N°28983 – March 2007). Subsequently, the Ministry developed an implementation plan for the 2007–2012 period and, again, for the 2012–2017 period, using gender data provided by INEI. In particular, data from the

2005 and 2007 census were used, as was data from the Demographic Health Survey and the National Time Use Survey.

4. **Maternal mortality:** The Mauritanian Ministry of Health is making use of census data for dealing with issues of maternal health with aid development partners.

In addition to the above examples, which focus on UNFPA mandate areas, table 17 presents a typology of the various uses of census more broadly. Most of these examples reflect the use of data for diagnosis, rather the analysis of data for incorporation in policymaking processes. Only the two last entries in the box include some scattered examples of use of census-related data for policy formulation and monitoring and evaluation of governmental programmes.

**Generating information on population size**, the census offers the ability to demarcate constituencies, for example electoral districts, and allocate financial resources such as state grants for municipalities. Census results are also used to draw the **sample frames** needed for other surveys, such as the Demographic and Health surveys (in most of the countries), but also surveys targeting specific groups (e.g. youth survey in Peru) or issues (e.g. gender-based violence in Palestine).

The census also provides data for calculating **social indicators**, particularly those that may be observed infrequently because they measure phenomena that change slowly over time and those that are needed for small areas or small population groups. In particular, census results were extensively used in all countries studied to **provide indicators of the MDGs**,<sup>101</sup> for example related to access to education, gender equality, access to drinking water or maternal mortality in some countries, and population denominators for other MDGs indicators.

A step further in the use of census and survey data is taking advantage of the wealth of information collected

100 See section 1.3.3 for details on stakeholder questionnaire outreach and response.

101 See for example the MDGs Bangladesh Progress Report 2015. Available at: [http://www.bd.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/MDG/MDGs%20Bangladesh%20Progress%20Report\\_%20PDF\\_Final\\_September%202015.pdf](http://www.bd.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/MDG/MDGs%20Bangladesh%20Progress%20Report_%20PDF_Final_September%202015.pdf)

Table 17. Type of uses of census data

Objectives	Main users	Examples
<p><b>Administrative organization of the country:</b> distribution of financial resources or electoral seats based on the population at the local administrative level</p>	<p>Line ministries, municipalities, local governments</p>	<p>In <b>Palestine</b>, national legislation distinguishes between different types of localities according to the size of their population. For example, it distinguishes between 'municipalities' (over 4,000 inhabitants) and 'village councils'. The municipalities are local governments as such, with autonomy over decision-making, budgets, personnel management and with members elected by the population with direct universal suffrage.</p> <p>In <b>Myanmar</b>, the Union Election Commission created electoral districts by combining the townships with the lowest populations into larger constituencies. The Union Election Commission used data collected from the 2014 national census to determine constituencies for the Upper house.</p> <p>In <b>Peru</b>, for a new district to be legally established, a 1982 law requires a minimum number of residents to live in the area: 3,500 if it is located in the rainforest, 4,000 in the Andes highlands and 10,000 in the coastal area.</p> <p>In <b>India</b>, under Article 82 of the Constitution, the Parliament by law enacts a Delimitation Act after every census.</p> <p>In <b>Kenya</b>, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission Act (L.N. 14/2012, March 2012) establishes the number and the name of the counties, constituencies and county assembly wards according to the population based on the 2009 Kenya National Population and Housing Census.</p> <p>In <b>Mauritania</b>, the Regional Development Fund is shared among municipalities according to factors such as population size given by the census, the poverty rate and the lack of infrastructures.</p>
<p>Description of the characteristics of the population at the national and subnational levels. Highlighting disparities (among territories or population groups) to serve as a <b>diagnosis</b>, using census data alone or in combination with other sources (e.g. surveys, administrative sources)</p>	<p>Line ministries (planning, health, education, employment, women, infrastructures)</p> <p>Local governments</p>	<p>In <b>Mauritania</b>, the regional directorates of the ministry of health use census data in combination with their own data (e.g. on health services) to compare the situation of their region to the national one.</p> <p>In <b>Palestine</b>, the Ministry of Local Government in Gaza reported that the census helped them to update their maps with more accurate information about population distribution; characteristics required to identify the need for schools, hospitals and infrastructure; and the capacities of each local government area.</p> <p>In <b>Peru</b>, census data were used in combination with the Health survey and the Household survey results to map monetary poverty in Peru at the district and village levels. The methodology involved developing a consumption model that includes explanatory variables (household and individual characteristics) available in both the census and the survey. By applying estimated coefficients to these same variables in the census data, consumption expenditures can be imputed to each census household.</p> <p>In <b>Kenya</b>, the Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban development intended to use census data to know whether people live in adequate living quarters, based on a housing quality indicator partly calculated from the age of the housing stock. Unfortunately, the last census did not collect this key piece of information</p> <p>In <b>Tajikistan</b>, the Ministry of Employment carries out analysis on the labour market, contextualizing census data. Through the use of census data, particularly when disaggregated, a more nuanced picture of the labour situation is obtained.</p> <p>In <b>Indonesia</b>, population census data was integrated into the Indonesian Disaster Information and Data in order to map out populations vulnerable to disasters. The system provides the Indonesian National Board for Disaster Management and other users with vital information to identify total and vulnerable populations in disaster-prone area.</p>

Objectives	Main users	Examples
Support for <b>policy formulation and development of strategies</b> at the national or subnational levels	Line ministries (planning, health, education, employment, women, infrastructures)  Local governments	<p>In <b>Mauritania</b>, the Ministry of Education uses the results from the census for strategic local-level planning based on the number of school-age children.</p> <p>In <b>Palestine</b>, the Ministry of Social Affairs used data from the census on education, health insurance coverage, housing characteristics and population projections to develop a social strategy</p> <p>In <b>Tajikistan</b>, census data were used in the strategy to improve living standards and reduce poverty;<sup>102</sup> with the strategy analysis highlighting the effect of population growth on development</p> <p>In <b>Indonesia</b>, the targets on enrolment rates of the education chapter of the National Mid-term Development Plan 2015–2019, are based on population projections, in turn based on census data.</p>
Support to <b>monitoring and evaluation</b> of public policies and strategies	Line ministries (planning, health, education, employment, women, infrastructures)  Local governments	<p>In <b>Mauritania</b>, annual monitoring of educational needs use population projections based on the census.</p> <p>In <b>Tajikistan</b>, The Ministry of Health relies greatly on census data. For example, the Ministry uses age groups to calculate several indicators. In 2011, the Ministry published a report on the Health Status and Performance of Health Facilities for 2010, in which census data was extensively used.<sup>103</sup></p> <p>In <b>Peru</b>, the social programmes at the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion use population estimates from the 2007 census. To monitor the programmes, the Ministry uses administrative registers; the results of the programmes are often assessed by looking at, among other sources, poverty maps drawn with census 2007 data.</p> <p>In <b>Rwanda</b>, the current Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy is based on new census data. The census data is used as an evaluation framework to monitor how the country is progressing developmentally. It takes place under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, which is a key data user, as economic development is a government priority.</p>
<b>Research purposes</b>	Academia  Research centres	<p>In <b>Peru</b>, The country office has been directly involved in promoting research based on statistical data. UNFPA has funded four research projects that used the 2007 census and/or the related surveys as the main source of data. The research projects supported work to advance gender equality, focusing on gender-based violence, the measurement of non-remunerated (domestic) work and women's empowerment and social inclusion.</p> <p>In <b>Palestine</b>, by fostering linkages between the NSO, Birzeit University and other academic institutions, most interviewed stakeholders were of the opinion that UNFPA has helped encourage a broader pool of census data users who have increased the demand for technically accurate information on specific areas of research.</p> <p>In <b>Kenya</b>, the African Institute for Development Policy, a regional organization, used Kenya census data for their own national and regional analyses of demographic dividend trends in east Africa (some of these analyses were funded by the UNFPA).</p> <p>In <b>Indonesia</b>, in cooperation with UNFPA, the International Institute for Environment and Development and the Urban and Regional Development Institute used census data and other types of geographical-related data to conduct research and to demonstrate the critical importance of population dynamics to climate change responses.</p>

Source: data and information from country cases study visits and from extended desk review countries.

102 UNFPA Country programme 2010-2015 evaluation, 2014.

103 Ministry of Health of Tajikistan, Dushanbe 2010. Given the census timeline, this publication could only rely on preliminary data from the 2010 census complementing projections from the 2000 census.

in a census to describe the characteristics of subnational territories and population groups. UNFPA has largely supported such analysis, for example through thematic reports or monographs. In all countries visited or studied during the evaluation, many examples were presented of such analyses and diagnosis, conducted from census results only or in combination with other sources, such as surveys (e.g. for poverty mapping, see Box 15) or administrative sources (e.g. health or education services). However, whereas these analyses provide a diagnosis of the situation, they do not lead systematically to the development of related plans and policies targeting the issues they reveal.

Whereas the use of census and survey data is in line with the objective of the strategic UNFPA Multi-year Funding Framework 2004–2007, more recent strategic plans emphasize using data at the national and subnational levels to develop and monitor policies and programme implementation and to strengthen national policies by integrating evidence-based analysis on population dynamics.

While government officials in the majority of case study countries stated that they were using census or survey data in policymaking processes, few examples were found of direct integration of statistical information in **policy formulation**. A deeper look shows that census data were used as general contextual information rather than direct input in policy formulation. For example, the Kenya Second Medium-term Plan 2013–2017 includes a few 2009 census results (access to piped water, population size in urban and rural areas, dwelling occupancy status and floor material),<sup>104</sup> but the Plan's gender and vulnerable population chapters do not mention data from the census.

As observed in the majority of in-country field visits, uses in **policy planning** were limited, such as planning for educational facilities based on the number of school-aged children in localities provided by the census and subsequent population projections (e.g. in Mauritania), or calculating health indicators in Tajikistan using age group populations. Noticeable exceptions were found in Peru and Palestine. In Peru, for example, the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations used census data to prepare the Law on Equality of Opportunities.<sup>105</sup> The Ministry subsequently developed implementation plans using gender data provided by the NSO with the support of UNFPA. In Palestine, the Ministry of Social Affairs developed their social strategy by using data from the census on education, health insurance coverage, housing characteristics and population projections.

In addition, the evaluation team observed that in case study countries, census results were primarily used in raw data form. The full potential of census data, including **cross-tabulating** variables among the

#### Box 15. An example of combined use of census and household surveys: poverty mapping in Peru

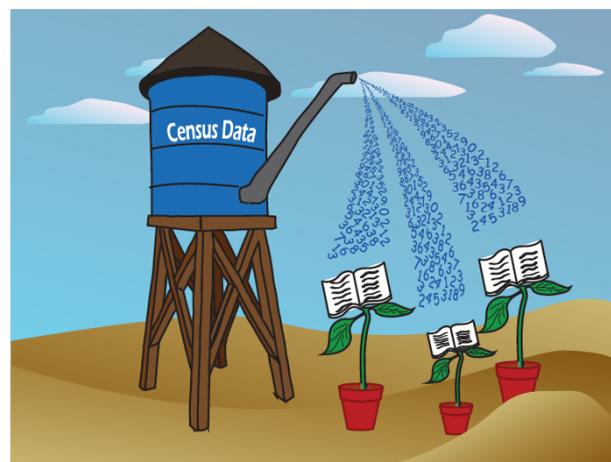
Census data were used in combination with the Health survey and the Household survey results to map monetary poverty in Peru at the district and village levels. The methodology involves developing a consumption model that includes explanatory variables (household and individual characteristics) available in both the census and the survey. By applying estimated coefficients to these same variables in the census data, consumption expenditures can be imputed to each census household.

various levels of observation (e.g. building, dwelling, household and individual), was not utilized. Stating school enrolment by sex provides a descriptive analysis alone; it does not explore the implications of those statistics for policy planning. In contrast, an analysis of the residence of out-of-school girls cross-tabulated with the educational level of their parents may provide valuable information for policies targeting girls in rural areas and whose parents have no education. As education is key to improving adolescent girls' sexual and reproductive health, UNFPA would benefit from supporting such detailed analysis that provides direct input for specific policy planning.

Not utilizing the full potential of census results impacts the **value for money of census for all stakeholders**. Enhancing the effective use of census data expands the 'benefit' side of a cost–benefit calculation and increases the value for money of census investment.

Though all development partners benefit from the use of census-related data, investment for the production

Figure 15. The underutilized potential of census data: lots of data, little use



104 Second Medium Term Plan (2013-2017). Government of the Republic of Kenya. 2013. Available at: <http://www.devolutionplanning.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/MTP2.pdf>

105 Ley de Igualdad de Oportunidades N°28983 – March 2007.

of data, beyond national governments, is concentrated among a few donors. The global community relies on data from census to monitor and evaluate the implementation of both national policy and internationally agreed development goals.<sup>106</sup>

***Users of the census: mostly government at the national level, less at local level***

In all countries visited and studied, line ministries and central-level government institutions are the main national users of census results. Census data use was much lower at subnational government levels (regional and local authorities) and among other national users such as academics, researchers and CSOs.

**Some examples of the main users of census data in the countries analysed in detail are:**

- Ministries of planning: the development of strategic plans (e.g. Mauritania, Palestine, Peru)
- Ministries of health: health situation, poverty (e.g. Mauritania, Myanmar, Palestine, Peru, Tajikistan, Rwanda)
- Ministries of education (e.g. Kenya, Palestine)
- Ministries of women (e.g. Kenya, Palestine, Peru)
- Ministries of economy (e.g. Indonesia, Mauritania, Palestine, Peru, Rwanda)
- Ministries of social affairs: health insurance coverage, housing characteristics and population projections (e.g. Palestine, Peru)
- Ministries of labour/employment: (e.g. Kenya, Palestine, Tajikistan)

As a result of long-standing cooperation prior to census operations, these ministries were already UNFPA partners; institutional and interpersonal links between UNFPA and ministerial staff were already set, with various levels of intensity.

The interest for and use of census and other survey data by regional or local authorities (districts or municipalities) is seemingly increasing, as demonstrated by Kenya (see Box 16). In particular, census data can help shed light on issues such as internal migration and the differences in living conditions between urban and rural areas and among regions. Census data can also ensure that public policies respond to these differences accordingly.

However, in most cases local-level institutions lack personnel with expertise in statistical analysis. In addition, the necessary infrastructure and equipment needed to use data effectively can malfunction (e.g. limited bandwidth in Tajikistan) or can be completely lacking (e.g. Kenya, Palestine, Peru and Rwanda). Even in a country like Peru (where census data is available), it is rarely utilized in the development of regional or local public policies because officials do not know how to make best use of it. Similarly, in Indonesia, census data is not used at the local level due to limited capacity

**Box 16. An example of enhanced capacity to use data at the local level in Kenya**

In Kenya, decision-making power has been increasingly decentralized to local authorities, which adapt national policies to local contexts. In return, local authorities are expected to provide local data to the national statistical system. Following devolution (after the 2010 constitutional reform), the need for local-level data fostered greater demand for quality national data that was disaggregated for local development planning and resource allocation.

and lack of demand for it, which go hand-in-hand.

In addition to serving specific governmental policy purposes, the population census provides indispensable data for the scientific analysis and appraisal of a population's composition, distribution and past and prospective growth. However, **the use of census data by the academic and research sector** has been uneven among the countries studied and, despite UNFPA efforts, is usually below its potential. In Peru, UNFPA has funded four research projects that used the 2007 census and/or the related surveys as the main source of data. The research projects supported work to advance gender equality, focusing on gender-based violence, the measurement of non-remunerated (domestic) work, women's empowerment and women's social inclusion. In Mauritania, the University of Nouakchott was not associated with the development of public policies, but UNFPA successfully advocated for its involvement in the analysis and validation of the census thematic reports. Few examples of the **use of census data by CSOs** were found in countries visited, with Peru and Palestine the exceptions. In both, women's NGOs stressed the added value of UNFPA in strengthening their analytical capacity to use census data for gender-related issues.

***Challenges in the use of census data***

Multisectoral themes require further data processing that ministerial staff is often unable to conduct. UNFPA has not further explored the use of multidimensional statistics in cross-sectoral approaches.<sup>107</sup> There are, however, good examples where UNFPA pushed for a more cross-sectoral approach, as featured in Palestine and Indonesia (see Box 17).

Surveys revealed that most country offices and two-thirds of the NSOs see facilitating and advocating for the use of census data in policymaking as a main strength of UNFPA.<sup>108</sup> However, this strength did not result in enhanced use of census data in policymaking. This indicates that though a strength, **advocacy was not enough to prompt the use of census data** and may need to be accompanied by other actions (such

106 See Figure 11 in Chapter 2.

107 The thematic reports and data posted in CensusInfo provide data for one sector.

108 See Table 27 in Evaluation Question 6.

### Box 17. UNFPA support to cross-sectoral approaches

In Palestine, UNFPA supported the combination of multiple data sources to address gender issues. After the 2007 census, UNFPA provided technical inputs to PCBS to develop indicators in youth and gender for integration into national statistical monitoring systems. In addition, UNFPA supported PCBS to conduct the national family health survey (PAPFAM-MICS) based on a census sample frame that covered reproductive health issues. As a result, gender, as a cross cutting issue, has been addressed in the documents, plans and strategies of various ministries.

In Indonesia, the Population and Development component of the Eighth Country Programme has supported the increase in capacity to carry out population analyses using the results of the 2010 census, surveys and projections. UNFPA has been working with the Directorate of Population, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection at the National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS). The NSO and the ministries are now better equipped to conduct complex analysis compiling multi-sourced data to obtain a more robust picture of the country's demographic situation.

as capacity development) in the framework of a long-term strategy for use.

UNFPA support did include capacity development, **but UNFPA-supported capacity development activities did not turn into concrete actions for census data use.** Countries were not equipped to tackle the challenge of improving the utilization of census data or exploiting the data's full potential for policymaking.

Capacity development on census data analysis took place in almost all case study countries. In addition, 60 per cent of respondents to the NSO survey reported being trained on dissemination activities. Yet, the reality on the ground showed that the effectiveness of these sessions was limited in terms of improving the analytical skills of the NSO and ministerial staff or other stakeholders (e.g. NGOs, the media).

Making a deeper and systematic use of statistics for policy and planning **would have required longer-term assistance on data utilization** that UNFPA has not sufficiently provided. Workshops organized to present census results to ministries or local governments are insufficient to develop the culture and skills necessary to utilize statistical information in planning tasks. Consequently, the use of census and survey data for policy planning is still limited.

The effectiveness of UNFPA support to enhancing census data use is especially limited in countries where the **skills and capacities of both the NSO and government ministries are lacking** and an **evidence-based policymaking culture is not widespread.** This was observed in field visits (with the exception of Peru). In field visit countries, increasing the capacity of the NSO and ministries to analyse statistical information requires more than organizing a series of workshops to present census results.

A long-term strategy with ongoing support activities is needed. For example, in Palestine, representatives of line ministries stated that while they appreciated any training or other analytical support provided thus far by UNFPA regarding use of census or statistical data, they required more comprehensive, long-term and intensive internal training within ministries in order to bring about any significant change in the institutional culture for evidence-based policy and planning. This would imply a shift from UNFPA support based on short-term actions identified in annual work plans towards multi-year projects to foster the use of statistical information in policymaking.

UNFPA is not the only agency interested in supporting the use of data for policymaking. This is an objective shared by most development partners and, therefore, addressing limited use is a shared responsibility. Nonetheless, the use of **data for evidence based policymaking** is a key priority of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, and a more active convening role by UNFPA (together with partners) would have been expected.

**Three additional factors** are associated with limitations on effectiveness of UNFPA support to enhancing census data use:

First, UNFPA did not engage as strongly or with as **long-term perspective on data use** as it did on production and availability: significantly more funds were spent on production than on use.<sup>109</sup> Country offices have largely resorted to soft-aid activities for awareness-raising or advocacy on the use of data, with technical assistance and training delivered much less frequently.

Second, country offices in countries belonging to the yellow and pink quadrants invoked the **UNFPA business model as limiting** their opportunities to support NSO or ministerial capacities to analyse and

109 See Evaluation Question 4 for more details on the allocation of funds for data use. In addition, actual support for the use of data in policymaking as presented in UNFPA strategic plans has not yet been fully conveyed into operational action plans (see Evaluation Question 1 on relevance).

110 This aspect was already pointed out in the third section of Evaluation Question 1, when explaining why the provision of technical assistance, necessary to develop the capacity of line ministries and other stakeholders to analyse and use data in policymaking and monitoring, was not supported as a mode of engagement.

use statistical data for policymaking.<sup>110</sup> The paradox is that given their level of democratic governance, these countries are expected to use data for policy formulation. As such these country offices are to engage mainly in advocacy and advice rather than on technical assistance and capacity development even if those are in fact needed.<sup>111</sup>

Third, **country offices lack guidance on how to support the use of data for policymaking.** Currently, there is no UNFPA global strategy on the use of census data and UNFPA has not capitalized on existing good practices for training or advice. As a result, some

country offices faced challenges in understanding the analytical possibilities of the use of census data for policymaking. This is particularly salient given the growing need for cross-cutting data analysis with the adoption of the 2030 development agenda.

The findings of this section are in line with the ICPD beyond 2014 report of February 2014, which points out that the objective of the Programme of Action that focused on integrating population data into development planning has not been realized in the previous two decades.<sup>112</sup>

*Participation and inclusion of partner governments and CSOs in the programming and implementation processes on the use of census data*

There is a consensus among governments in the countries analysed on the **positive role UNFPA played in strengthening national leadership and ownership of the census** by encouraging the participation and engagement of all relevant national stakeholders in census processes. It is significant that none of the respondents to the NSO survey pointed out any weakness of UNFPA support in this regard. There are several country-level examples of significant UNFPA efforts to ensure the participation of relevant national stakeholders in the analysis and use of census results.

Ownership is a major programming principle supported by UNFPA; UNFPA aims to ensure that ministries and organizations (beginning with the NSO) have the capacity to manage and control the resources needed for the design, implementation and monitoring of census processes and associated surveys. In practice, UNFPA has facilitated national ownership by expanding the leadership capacity in ministries and NSOs, who have all been able to produce outputs (even in countries facing political difficulties and delays).

Several case study reports provide concrete examples of this, highlighting how national ownership improves the quality of the census itself. In Kenya, for instance, the majority of stakeholders explicitly expressed their appreciation for the key role UNFPA played during the census process in facilitating and encouraging national buy-in, decision-making and ownership. In Palestine, UNFPA contributed significantly to the creation of a national population committee, which strengthened national ownership and policy leadership in population and development issues.

Similarly to the findings presented on the use of census data, UNFPA support put more emphasis on central-level government stakeholders than on local governments and CSOs. As a consequence, **signs of fostering national ownership and leadership are more evident in NSOs and line ministries** than in civil society and local governments.

Table 18 illustrates how UNFPA activities in awareness-raising and technical assistance primarily targeted line

**Table 18. UNFPA support for data use by modality of support and type of stakeholder**

*Proportion of country offices reporting activities in awareness-raising and technical assistance for data use (in %)*

Stakeholder	Modality of support	
	Awareness-raising	Technical assistance
Line ministries	98	93
Local governments	67	52
Civil society organizations	59	47

*Source: Country office survey*

111 In Peru, the fact that activities for data use were mainly carried out as soft-aid activities — meaning outside the formal annual work plans — illustrates the difficult positioning of capacity development for data use given the current business model.

112 See paragraph 655 of the Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014. Report of the Secretary-General. February 2014.

**Box 18. User-producer consultations on Myanmar**

User-producer consultations have been held since the end of 2014 by the Department of Population in partnership with UNFPA. In these meetings, the Department of Population shares ways of tabulating census data and receives feedback from data users on how best to present main census results and thematic reports. These consultations are paving the way for future data use in Myanmar.

ministries (98 per cent), then, to a lesser degree, local authorities (67 per cent), and finally civil society (59 per cent).

**Evidence shows that consultation has been uneven across stakeholder groups within countries.** At times, NSOs found it difficult to involve CSOs in the census. CSOs are potential census users who, though not formally involved in the financial, political and technical preparation of the census, may contribute to improving the alignment of the census to the needs of society. This improves the relevance of census data and thus the quality of the census overall. The scope of consultations varied according to the previous consultation experiences and profile of stakeholders in the country. In Rwanda, for example, the government consulted women's groups, whose long-standing activism in the country allowed them to be recognized as active partners. This had a positive impact on the quality of the questionnaire, particularly for gender analysis (see Evaluation Question 7).<sup>113</sup>

Consultation with CSOs was weak in some countries, hindering CSO participation in census design. In Myanmar, a national advisory committee was set up to ensure the involvement of CSOs, although work began quite late in the process, undermining genuine participation. However, through user-producer consultations, participation, inclusion and ownership improved over time (see Box 18).

Fruitful consultations and open dialogue on the census is a challenge. In Kenya and other countries, stakeholders from various groups (e.g. academic, CSOs, the private sector) requested a broader, more inclusive approach to ensure ownership of the census data and greater interest in its use. In Tajikistan, despite consultations and the strong suggestion by UNFPA to broaden the census by including additional topics in the questionnaire, some suggested topics were not integrated fully (such as migration). The aforementioned delays with the advisory committee in Myanmar were also partly related with the government not being fully comfortable with consultations with civil society in a context characterized by decades of military rule and confrontation.

UNFPA paid attention to local-level ownership and advocated strongly to ensure that the census responded to the needs of decentralization reforms being implemented in a large number of countries under review (Cameroon, Indonesia, Kenya, Myanmar, Peru, Tajikistan and Rwanda). However, as observed in all visited countries, the use of census results by local governments is still limited.

Ensuring the participation and inclusion of national stakeholders in a way that fosters national ownership and leadership is highly associated with the **quality of census governance mechanisms** (e.g. national advisory committees, census advisory boards, donor coordination mechanisms). These mechanisms establish what input stakeholders may provide to the census process and how, as well as the channels through which their concerns can be voiced. Census governance mechanisms are thus crucial to ensure the application of UNFPA basic principles. However, despite their importance, there is no corporate guidance on the minimum standards to be followed by programme countries.

113 Rwanda is another country with a relatively high government effectiveness indicator score and statistical capacity index.

**Evaluation question 4. To what extent were available resources adequate, made available and used in a timely manner to support the 2010 census round? To what extent did UNFPA utilize synergies at the country, regional and global levels with a view to support the implementation of the 2010 Round?**

Summary of Findings:

Efficiency

Efficient fund management resulted in high resource utilization rates, swift procurement and timely censuses on the whole. Procurement procedures caused stumbling blocks at times and delays occurred in several countries, but with limited effects on implementation. UNFPA made very strategic use of funds in terms of enumeration coverage and strategic profile of the countries supported. However, funding has concentrated on supporting data production, with low investments in data analysis and use, despite improved data use being at the core of the outcome-level changes UNFPA pursues in its support to census.

Appropriate internal mechanisms, such as the Special Initiative on Census (SIC) and the UNFPA Interdivisional Working Group on Census were established to ensure corporate access to advice and a specialized census technical resource base during the 2010 census round implementation. However, SIC did not consolidate and the working group on census played a rather limited role.

There are tangible indications of a loss of in-house census expertise, which is partly an unintended consequence of the regionalization process that began in 2008. The decline in expertise poses risks in terms of relationships with key donors, the ability to mobilize resources and the value added of UNFPA as the United Nations agency mandated to work on population and data-related issues.

*Use of available resources*

Overall, UNFPA has **efficiently managed resources for census implementation**, as reflected in aggregated financial data and in-country evidence.

The **rate of absorption** of available resources has been very satisfactory. Financial data from 2005 to December 2014 reveals that UNFPA fund execution

for the 2010 census round has been high. Yearly fund execution rates fluctuated, though not wildly, over the period with an overall average of 81 per cent during the ten-year period (see Table 19).<sup>114</sup>

Data reveals that funds were not only spent without major bottlenecks, but **also in a timely manner**.

**Table 19. Fund execution rates**

Year	Budget in USD	Expenditures in USD	Execution rates
2005	24,405,614	23,037,656	94%
2006	14,808,261	13,456,446	91%
2007	57,568,437	45,867,385	80%
2008	63,077,762	47,895,517	76%
2009	21,775,763	16,786,907	77%
2010	29,235,209	22,803,835	78%
2011	33,826,020	27,029,401	80%
2012	22,193,220	17,319,502	78%
2013	20,180,066	15,019,505	74%
2014	86,371,645	72,452,241	84%
<b>Total</b>	<b>373,441,997</b>	<b>301,668,394</b>	<b>81%</b>

Source: Atlas Data January 1, 2005 – December 2014, generated at UNFPA headquarters and, in some cases, by country offices.

<sup>114</sup> The execution rate is the percentage of the yearly budget that is spent each year.

Table 20. Timeliness of payments as perceived by National Statistical Offices

Efficiency of payments	Percentage of respondents <sup>115</sup>
Payments were done on time	56
Payments were, at times, late without impact	23
Payments were, at times, late causing delays	21
Late payments were a serious problem	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: NSO survey.

Results of the NSO survey, country case studies and extended desk reviews suggest swift procurement processes and high resource utilization rates on the whole, resulting in timely censuses.

There have been no major issues with fund administration and absorption capacity. This does not mean, however, that fund management was free of challenges. There were some payment delays, but they **never** jeopardized the conduct of the census (see Table 20).

**Occasional payment delays due to late disbursements by UNFPA**, as observed in Bangladesh, Rwanda and Myanmar, were remedied in a manner that did not cause significant adverse effects on census implementation. It is particularly noteworthy that the two censuses involving the largest amount of funds managed by UNFPA (Peru and Myanmar)<sup>116</sup> both occurred under very stringent timelines and challenging contexts, but produced timely census results nonetheless. Box 19 identifies some of the common corporate approaches that stand out as success factors in these two very different contexts experiencing similar constraining factors.

**Efficient funds management was not only a recurrent finding in country case studies and extended desk review countries**, it also emerged (with a few exceptions), in the NSO and country office surveys. Sixty-two per cent of NSO respondents considered UNFPA to be very successful in providing financial support; 59 per cent believed UNFPA to be very successful in service delivery, including procurement (see Table 21). Only a small number of NSO respondents considered UNFPA to be unsuccessful in these two areas.<sup>117</sup> The same question was posed to UNFPA country offices, with responses relatively similar to those of the NSOs (second part of Table 21), suggesting a degree of validity of results.

Another indication of the overall satisfactory management of funds is that 43 per cent of respondents to the NSO survey considered **managing**

#### Box 19. The ability to deliver under stringent deadlines, in challenging contexts and despite delays

Myanmar and Peru are the top two countries by financial expenditure on support to the 2010 census. Though very different countries in all accounts, there were similar contextual factors: 1) the governments had made an explicit request to UNFPA to manage the entire census operation 2) the context was politically sensitive, in Myanmar because it was the first census in more than 30 years in a transition to democracy scenario, and in Peru, because the results of the 2005 census had not been politically accepted and the 2007 census had to be successful to work; and 3) in both countries, logistics of the payment of enumerators were very challenging – no banks covering rural areas in Myanmar and restrictions to open accounts in Peruvian provinces.

Despite these constraints, UNFPA managed to comply with the massive logistic and operational requirements of the exercise. Common explanatory factors behind the success are: 1) a quick institutional response capacity of the country offices; 2) well-suited ad-hoc operational arrangements e.g. a joint Procurement Services Branch-country office team in Myanmar and a joint NSO-country office procurement team in Peru. In Myanmar, coordination and partnerships with United Nations agencies and other national and international stakeholders were crucial factors for success. In both cases execution rates were very high and census results were timely.

**and administering funds and/or procurement a unique strength** or advantage of UNFPA in its support to census in their countries. When narrowing the responses down to only those NSOs that received service delivery support from the UNFPA, the proportion that believed UNFPA to have a unique strength in this area increases from 43 to 72 per cent.<sup>118</sup>

115 Percentage of respondents corresponds to 33 respondent NSO declaring to have received financial support from the UNFPA.

116 Peru and Myanmar are the two countries with the highest level of financial resources managed by UNFPA: \$33.7 and \$36.4 million respectively.

117 One in 29 NSO considered that the UNFPA was unsuccessful in service delivery; three of 42 considered it to be unsuccessful in providing financial support.

118 23 NSOs in 53 (43 per cent) considered that managing and administering funds and/or procurement is a unique strength of the UNFPA. The 53 include receivers (29) and non-receivers (24) of UNFPA service delivery. Of the 29 NSOs receiving UNFPA service delivery, 21 (72 per cent) considered managing and administering funds as a UNFPA strength.

Table 21. Perceived success of UNFPA in financial support and service delivery

As seen by national statistical offices				
How successful was UNFPA in its role in:	Very successful	Somewhat successful	Not successful	Total
Providing financial support	62%	31%	7%	100%
Service delivery, including procurement	59%	38%	3%	100%
As seen by UNFPA country offices				
How successful was UNFPA in its role in:	Very successful	Somewhat successful	Not successful	Total
Providing financial support	57%	37%	6%	100%
Service delivery, including procurement	65%	29%	6%	100%

Source: NSO survey and country office survey respondent data

Procurement procedures were a challenge at times. A number of UNFPA country offices explicitly pointed to delays in procuring experts, materials or equipment due to procedures either at UNFPA or by the government. Despite occasionally reported lengthy procurement procedures, service provision to the census was generally timely, with no significant consequences to the overall census operation when delays occurred.<sup>119</sup>

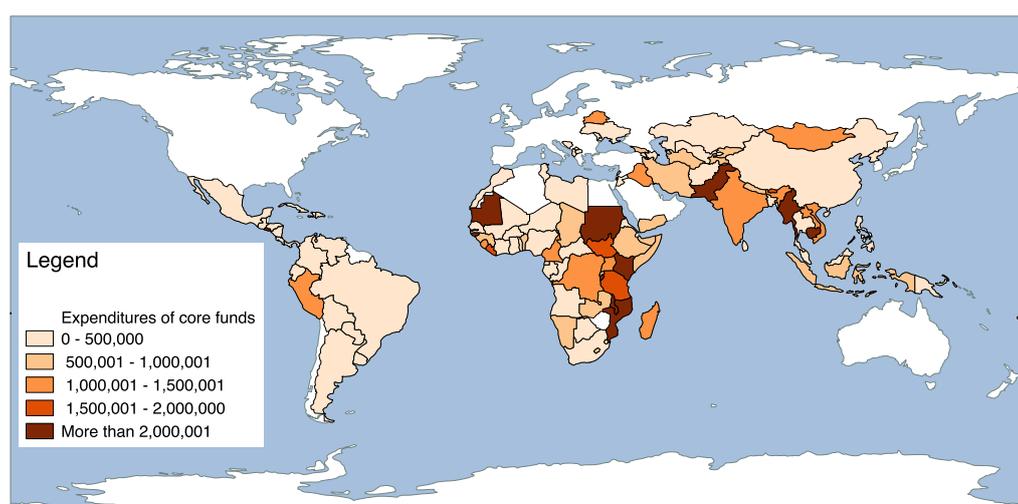
**UNFPA core funds were strategically directed, but were at times considered inadequate by country offices.** See Figure 16 for the worldwide distribution of UNFPA core funds during the 2010 census.

Among dark-brown shaded countries — i.e. those with higher UNFPA core expenditure — many are considered strategic: Sudan, where the joint census

(Sudan and South Sudan) was part of the peace agreement; Timor Leste, one of the newest countries in the world;<sup>120</sup> Palestine, crucial for its geopolitical significance and humanitarian crisis situation; Myanmar, a country in transition to democracy, requesting support at the highest institutional levels after more than 30 years without a census; Kenya, a country in a post-conflict situation; and Mauritania, a post-coup country.

Furthermore, Table 22 clearly shows that average core funds per country office are highest in Eastern and Southern Africa and in Asia and the Pacific. These are two crucial regions in terms of census coverage, given that they are the regions with the highest number of non-enumerated individuals during the 2000 census round that were covered by the 2010 round.

Figure 16. Map of the core funds expenditure by country offices, in USD



Source: Atlas Data January 1, 2005 – December 2014, generated at UNFPA headquarters and, in some cases, by country offices.

119 Eight of the 55 country offices (15 per cent) answering the open question on main challenges or weaknesses in UNFPA support to the 2010 census round included an explicit reference to lengthy procurement procedures resulting in delays. The fact that the question was an open question and not a multiple-choice question increases the significance of the response.

120 Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/09/16/the-9-newest-countries-in-the-world/>

Table 22. Distribution of expenditures of county offices by core and non-core funds by region for the period 2005-2014, in USD

Region	Country offices	Total expenditures	Core Funds	Average Core Funds per country office	Non - Core Funds
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	15	8,113,239	5,430,085	362,006	2,683,154
Latin America and the Caribbean	19	44,249,215	6,186,029	325,580	38,063,186
Arab States	12	29,242,575	7,803,922	650,327	21,438,653
West and Central Africa	22	23,448,503	14,842,034	674,638	8,606,469
East and Southern Africa	21	97,878,893	27,940,739	1,330,511	69,938,154
Asia and the Pacific	23	82,957,724	30,348,955	1,319,520	52,608,769
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>285,890,150</b>	<b>92,551,764</b>	<b>826,355</b>	<b>193,338,386</b>

Source: Atlas Data January 1, 2005 – December 2014, generated at UNFPA headquarters and, in some cases, by country offices

Data collection in case study and extended desk review countries suggests that joint planning conducted through annual work plans accurately determined resource requirements for census for the most part. No shortcomings in funding allocated within annual work plans were reported in either the NSO or country office surveys. However, the country office survey results raise concerns regarding the amount of core funding available, suggesting that country offices found census core funding to be insufficient. One-third of the 55 UNFPA country offices (36 per cent) answering the open question on main challenges or weaknesses in UNFPA support to the 2010 census round explicitly pointed to insufficient budget / limited financial support, a challenge also acknowledged by NSOs (though to a lesser extent).<sup>121</sup>

Though findings suggest that available resources were used to a satisfactory extent, a higher proportion of funds were spent on supporting the production of census data than on its analysis, dissemination and use. A cursory search of Atlas reveals that only \$2.7 million of a total of \$301 million spent on census was linked to activities with a clear and explicit reference to dissemination, the use of data for policymaking or the development of plans.<sup>122</sup> Even when controlling for errors and the inherent limitations of capturing census expenditure using the UNFPA financial platform, 0.9 per cent of expenditure on use is an indication of a significant imbalance. As noted in Evaluation Question 3, country offices have largely resorted to soft-aid activities for awareness-raising or advocacy on the use of data, with technical assistance and training limited, further suggesting that the bulk of financial resources have not been directed at enhancing the capacity to use data.

**Investment in census appears to be disproportionately skewed towards the production of data**, with resources for data use inadequate, potentially undermining the overall value for money of support to census. Appropriate levels of funding for all phases of the census (including the production and use of census data for evidence-based policymaking) are needed.

A value for money calculation should not simply include the value produced in supporting the production and use of data. **Investment in census also generates organization-wide benefits.** Census expenditure over the period under review is 4 per cent of UNFPA total expenditure (and 1 per cent of total UNFPA core expenditure),<sup>123</sup> a small fraction of UNFPA investment (see Figure 17). Yet census support has produced substantial multiplying effects

#### Box 20. Concentration of the expenditure vis-à-vis the theory of change

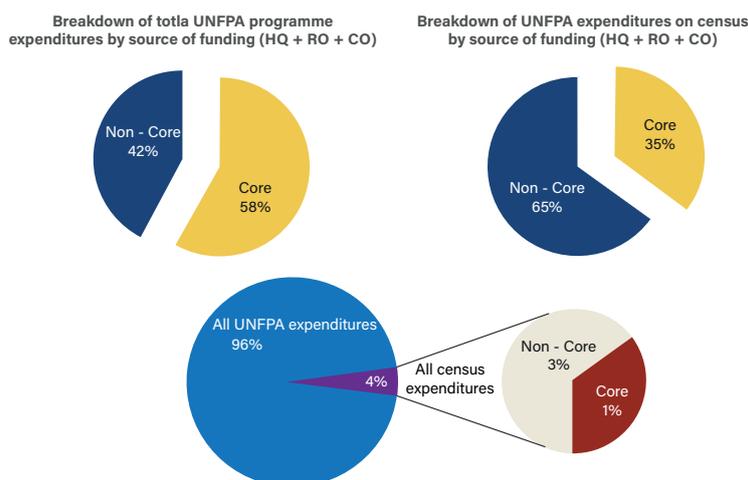
There are indications of a very high concentration of expenditure in the data production strategy of the theory of change (strengthening the capacity of national stakeholders to produce and disseminate census-related data) and a disproportionately lower expenditure on the data use strategy (strengthening the capacity of national stakeholders to analyse and use the data for evidence-based policymaking). This is despite the fact that enhanced capacity for data use is at the core of Outcome Four of the 2014-2017 UNFPA Strategic Plan to which census support is intended to contribute.

121 Very few NSOs responded to the open question on weaknesses, yet two of the four that did pointed to insufficient financial contributions to the census.

122 Annual work plans in country programmes include expenditure on support to enhancing capacity for data use, but that is outside and beyond census activities. In this search, the goal was to identify census data use enhancing capacity activities carried out as part of the census project i.e. throughout the census operation and immediately following it.

123 Includes programmatic, administrative/coordination and management expenditure, covering all programme areas (reproductive health and rights, population and development, gender equality, human rights and adolescents and youth).

Figure 17. Dashboard of core and non-core funds for census versus total UNFPA programme expenditures 2005 to 2014



Source: Atlas Data January 1, 2005 – December 2014, generated at UNFPA headquarters and, in some cases, by country offices.

across other mandate areas in which UNFPA works (gender equality, sexual and reproductive rights),<sup>124</sup> elevating UNFPA institutionally. The value of these effects, though difficult to measure, should not be underestimated.

Data for Figure 17 was captured with significant difficulty. The internal UNFPA financial platform (Atlas) does not track census expenditure as such (in general or by phase). While expenditure data are linked to particular activity descriptions within Atlas, descriptions are often vague or written in a generic manner (e.g. support to census), making it impossible

to rely solely on Atlas data to ascertain the type of census support provided by UNFPA or the phase to which the support was provided. **As a result of how UNFPA information and reporting systems are set up, the ability to track census expenditure specifically is compromised.**

This is detrimental to improving outcome-based management and, ultimately, compromises the ability to determine the efficiency of financial support to census. For more information on Atlas and capturing census expenditure, please see Volume 3.

*Internal synergies between UNFPA country, regional and global levels to support the implementation of the 2010 census round.*

**UNFPA established two mechanisms to support the implementation of the 2010 census round:** the Special Initiative on Census (SIC) and the Interdivisional Working Group on Census (IWGC).

**SIC faced a series of obstacles.** The first related to a mismatch between the initiative's objectives and the resources allocated, particularly human resources and time. Initial objectives of the SIC included "facilitating access to technical resources and training opportunities by encouraging South-South cooperation across countries and regions" and ensuring "that data generated from the 2010 census round was widely

disseminated and extensively used for the preparation of development plans and programmes, as well as for their monitoring and evaluation."<sup>125</sup> SIC delivered a number of regional trainings and produced a series of manuals and guidelines,<sup>126</sup> but its achievements were far from its stated objectives.

SIC was launched in 2008 and ran until June 2010, when it was considerably slimmed down<sup>127</sup> and absorbed by the Population and Development Branch of the UNFPA Technical Division.<sup>128</sup> Some funding remained after absorption, but the human resources dedicated to the initiative were significantly diminished. The SIC

124 Census support produces these multiplying effects through networking (see partnerships under Evaluation question 5) and strategic positioning in partner countries (see added value in Evaluation question 6).

125 <http://www.unfpa.org/resources/special-initiative-census-supporting-2010-round> and background note on SIC provided by the Population and Development Branch.

126 2009 Annual Report; Project Coordinator-Census. February 2010 and undated note titled: Some concerns raised by the SIC, provided by the Population & Development Branch.

127 UNFPA did not document the reason for slimming down the SIC.

128 Minutes of the UNFPA Interdivisional Working Group on Census, October 2013.

coordinator and the Senior Census Analyst were not replaced. The only staff member dedicated to census support after the SIC was absorbed, was a P2 analyst position, covering some aspects of the work.<sup>129</sup>

The knowledge products SIC generated were absorbed by the Population and Development Branch and featured on their website, but there is no evidence of regional or country offices using the products as resources. Uptake of SIC at regional offices never occurred. All regional offices conducted trainings in which the tools/knowledge products were presented on pen drives, with the expectation that regional officers would take the initiative over and play a role in continuing the SIC. However, annual meetings providing feedback on SIC materials or refresher training sessions for country offices did not occur and it is very difficult to find evidence of the use of the guidelines and materials that were delivered as handouts in the regional trainings.<sup>130</sup>

The absence of systematic follow-up to SIC activities seems to be one of the main reasons why SIC did not succeed in creating a sustained census support institutional structure and culture with permanent links and a coordinated response between the three corporate levels (headquarters, regional and country offices). In this context, the initiative dwindled and eventually faded away, without having consolidated in a sustainable manner.

One of the main SIC activities was to maintain a global database of census experts, systematizing available expertise on census to create a pool of experts accessible to country and regional offices. The **population development hub** (pop-dev-hub), an internal UNFPA mailing list that connects the Population and Development programme and technical staff across country and regional offices, is the current manifestation of this. There is anecdotal evidence of the pop-dev-hub having successfully assisted in identifying census experts (e.g. in the Solomon Islands, in Peru), but it remains limited to internal networking (rather than a global database of census experts for UNFPA-wide use, as originally intended).

According to country office survey results, 20 per cent of the respondents (13 country offices) reported that staff members from UNFPA headquarters provided technical assistance to the census project. This is an indication that **headquarters played a role in providing in-person or remote technical assistance**. However, that role was circumscribed to the period when SIC was operational, as a closer look at the 13

respondent country offices reveals that the reported support was provided during the first years of the 2010 census round.

The **Interdivisional Working Group on Census** (IWGC), launched to support the 2010 census round, was established as a headquarters-based advisory body providing country offices with advice on resource mobilization, timelines and the identification of census experts. IWGC members included technical division experts, IT, procurement and resource mobilization experts.<sup>131</sup> Reportedly, over the last five years, IWGC has supported the census in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Sierra Leone and South Sudan.<sup>132</sup> IWGC was reactivated in December 2015 to support the 2020 round.

Country case studies and extended desk reviews revealed that census-related staff in regional and country offices are not familiar with the IWGC, its scope or the support that it offers. In fact, most accounts of support to country offices on census are linked to the Country Support Teams, only operative prior to the regionalization process in 2008.

There have been synergies between regional and country offices, yet the regional offices' potential support role has not been fulfilled. The UNFPA Strategic Plan 2014–2017 explicitly mentions the role that regional offices should play in brokering highly specialized expertise sought by country offices.<sup>133</sup> Only 47 per cent of the country offices responding to the country office survey reported that the regional office provided technical backstopping in support of the national census; 45 per cent shared that the regional office had a main role in providing technical assistance to the census project.<sup>134</sup> Notably, 53 per cent of country offices did not receive technical support from regional offices, a rather striking percentage given that regional offices are expected to provide technical support (including brokering technical expertise).

Country case studies, extended desk reviews and the results of the data collection for the regional component of the evaluation reveal that some regional offices do indeed follow a partnership approach in their support to country offices by providing assistance in crucial moments or in vital areas. This was, for example, seen in the Asia Pacific Regional Office in the Bangladesh and Myanmar censuses. Country assessments also show that whenever regional offices are expected to provide light, demand-driven guidance or assistance, they perform well, as was shown in Palestine and Peru, with the Arab States and the Latin America and the Caribbean regional offices respectively. However, when

129 Background note on the SIC provided by the Population & Development Branch.

130 Some of the guidelines are available on the PDB website, but it is difficult to find them and their use has not been actively promoted.

131 Terms of Reference of the Interdivisional Working Group on Census, 2015.

132 Minutes of the UNFPA Interdivisional Working Group on Census, October 2013.

133 See paragraphs 37 and 42 of the Business Model of the Strategic Plan 2014–2017.

134 For technical backstopping there are no significant differences between regions and between quadrants i.e. answers are all around 50 per cent regardless of the region or the quadrant.

technical requirements are high, as in Indonesia and Kenya, the regional offices have difficulties providing expertise, suggesting that they either do not have the expertise internally and/or cannot find it elsewhere. In the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, the absence of a Population and Development Adviser from 2008 to 2013 significantly limited the support the regional office was able to provide to the 2010 census round.

Eighty per cent of country offices responding to the country office survey believe that regional offices should play a **more active role** in the coordination of censuses during the 2020 round and better support country offices.<sup>135</sup> Similarly, when asked via an open question which areas UNFPA regional offices should play a more active role in the support of census, 40 per cent of respondents to the country office survey explicitly mentioned the provision of technical assistance.

A decrease of in-house census expertise is impacting headquarters, regional offices and country offices, with the latter most acutely affected. With the SIC inoperative, IWGC advice (targeting primarily country office representatives) and the technical advice from population and development regional advisers constitute the only census-specific internal corporate expertise available to country offices. This contrasts with the situation prior to the regionalization process, when internal and external census expertise was readily available to country offices through country support teams and their networks.

The decrease in in-house census expertise is occurring at a time when UNFPA staff charged with providing population and development or census support do not consider themselves experts. The majority (61 per cent) of respondents to the country office survey shared that they do not consider themselves fully-fledged census experts; 39 per cent do, with the large majority of these (75 per cent) demographers by training (not statisticians). Longitudinal data from UNFPA Human Resources Division reveals that only 29 per cent of the 55 technical advisers working in Country Support Teams prior to 2008 work at UNFPA today. Another 29 per cent terminated their contracts; 40 per cent retired. This data, coupled with the results of the country office survey and the fact that the majority of SIC personnel were not replaced, suggest a **process of attrition adversely affecting internal UNFPA census expertise**.

A consequence of diminishing internal census expertise is the perception among some external stakeholders (such as the United Nations Statistical Division) that UNFPA country office capacity to provide census technical expertise is uneven. While donors interviewed at the country and global levels did not raise this as a concern, donors did mention UNFPA census expertise as contributing to their confidence in UNFPA managing (their) financial contributions to census. **In-house expertise depletion, therefore, may affect UNFPA resource mobilization capacity and the added value of UNFPA (as perceived by donors) to census.**

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135 See footnote 85 in Evaluation question 2.

**Evaluation question 5. To what extent has UNFPA made use of its existing networks to establish partnerships at the country, regional and global levels as well as to promote opportunities for South-South cooperation with a view to supporting the implementation of the 2010 Round in a way that ensured swift implementation of the census and optimized the use of its results?**

Summary of Findings:

Efficiency and Effectiveness

Strategic networking was fully integrated into UNFPA support to the 2010 census round, particularly at the country and regional levels. Strategic partnerships (some established through the use of networks) were put in place to address complex issues and connect national stakeholders.

Country-level partnerships contributed to the successful implementation of census and, at times, generated economies of scale and cost savings. However, the partnerships focused on data production and availability; there was little evidence of support to enhancing national capacities for data use.

UNFPA support to census featured the facilitation of demand-driven technical exchanges, highly valued by NSOs.

Although NSOs see the ability of UNFPA to promote South-South cooperation as a valuable institutional asset, UNFPA has yet to fully explore South-South cooperation as a support strategy. In addition, the scope of South-South cooperation exchanges has been limited, focusing on census data production rather than on census data use (similar to country-level partnerships). Moreover, South-South cooperation seldom included intra-regional cooperation.

However, the 2010 round featured innovative approaches to delivering technical assistance through South-South cooperation and innovative approaches to delivering UNFPA support to the development of national South-South cooperation strategies. The actual role of UNFPA regional offices in South-South cooperation has been rather modest and country- and regional-level South-South cooperation strategies are absent.

*Use of partnerships to facilitate the implementation of the 2010 Census Round*

Although the case studies are not representative of UNFPA support in all settings, they point to a clear institutional pattern: **the effective mobilization of and engagement in multilevel, multidimensional**

**partnerships and networks as a common feature of UNFPA support to the 2010 census round.** This was observed in contexts as diverse as Kenya, Myanmar, Palestine, Peru and Rwanda, and indicates that this

**Table 23. Examples of countries using multilevel, multidimensional partnerships**

<b>Myanmar</b>	The country office adopted an intensive partnership approach during the preparation and implementation of the census operation. This encompassed partnering with all government administrative-territorial tiers, nine ministries, academia, civil society (quite difficult at the outset given the complex political context) and other United Nations agencies. This multilevel and multi-stakeholder approach contributed to the successful implementation of a highly complex census.
<b>Palestine</b>	The country office established successful partnerships with the Palestinian National Authority, line ministries, civil society, United Nations agencies and donor-funding agencies. United Nations agencies effectively coordinated census support via United Nations Country Team working groups and United Nations Development Assistance Framework joint activities, through which UNFPA mobilized multi-agency involvement and co-funding. Linkages were strong among UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNOCHA to support NSOs and statistics in general.
<b>Peru</b>	Over time, the establishment of partnerships based on working relationships with stakeholders (outside the government and the NSO) fostered the use of census-related data through advocacy and policy dialogue. For example, the Peru country office actively participated in Poverty Reduction Round Table working groups, in the Inter-agency Group on Statistics and in the development of the Inter-institutional Technical Committee on Ethnicity.

approach is a characteristic feature of UNFPA support. The absence of partnerships with key stakeholders working on census was the exception.<sup>136</sup>

**Country-level partnerships and recurring coordination with external stakeholders had positive net results on census implementation.** Partnerships and established/ongoing coordination made large and logistically complex census operations feasible. In Peru, for example, it was through partnerships that UNFPA was able to obtain authorization to open bank accounts in all country regions to pay enumerators. Country-level partnerships also led to cost savings. In Myanmar, for example, the decision to use and train township officers (rather than hire external consultants) to produce the maps needed for enumeration, generated \$300,000 in savings. In Kenya, the ongoing partnership between UNFPA, technical expertise providers and the NSO helped create a solid in-country knowledge base that provided census and statistical consulting expertise.

**In some country offices, networking played a critical role in mobilizing stakeholders and resources and in financial resource pooling.** This was clearly observed in Kenya, Myanmar and Palestine and was reported in Bangladesh. In these countries, an inclusive partnership approach (with UNFPA leadership) contributed to efficiency throughout the census process: from developing the census proposal and plan formulation to establishing donor coordination mechanisms and funding arrangements. In the very challenging context of Myanmar, for example, partnering with the private sector made payments to enumerators possible. In Kenya, pooled funding arrangements — with donor funds flowing through UNFPA — provided efficiency gains and reduced transaction, overhead and reporting costs for development partners and the NSO.

**Intense networking and partnership approaches also helped to ensure coordination and avoid overlap with other development partners.** In Kenya, Peru and Tajikistan, networking and partnerships supported inter-agency consultation. Global-level coordination ensured a clear division of labour between UNFPA and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), with UNFPA supporting the implementation through its country offices and UNSD in charge of technical standards at the global level. In Mauritania, the approach promoted networking among organizations (including government departments) that did not usually work together and resulted in the establishment of a network of focal points for the census in each ministry.

**UNFPA also established strong partnerships with the United Nations Country Teams (UNCT)/United Nations system for the 2010 census round in the**

**majority of country cases studied.** This approach was visible, though to varying degrees, in Kenya, Mauritania, Myanmar, Palestine and Tajikistan. In Mauritania, UNFPA actively involved the International Organization for Migration, UNDP, UNHCR and UNICEF in the preparation of the census enumeration form. In Myanmar, the country office not only regularly discussed census issues through UNCT meetings, but there were also important efficiency gains as a result of the strong partnership approach with the United Nations agencies.<sup>137</sup> In Palestine, strong partnership mechanisms resulted in financial contributions from other United Nations agencies to the census and in the co-financing of major sectoral surveys.

Partnerships between UNFPA and stakeholders were generally limited to the census operation alone; partnerships to enhance national capacity for data use were rarely adopted. When partnership for data use occurred, it often took place in the framework of line ministries requesting capacity development on data analysis skills (see examples provided in Evaluation Question 3). Examples of UNFPA partnering with CSOs to build capacity for data use in advocacy, as was the case in Peru, were also quite rare.

**In supporting country offices, regional offices used a partnership approach** with regional stakeholders in order to promote capacity development, advocate for a common approach on methods and to address specific issues such as ethnicity or ageing (see Table 24).

**The strong partnership approach at the country and regional levels was not replicated at the global level.** There were responses to ad hoc requests from UNSD, a certain level of coordination with them (the division of labour mentioned above) as well as sporadic collaboration with them in specific projects such as CensusInfo and the Iraqi census. However, this working relationship was neither formalized nor institutionalized during the 2010 census round and did not present the core features of a partnership (e.g. regular meetings, joint work plan).

136 In Bangladesh, for example, the US Census Bureau was reluctant to engage in a coordinated approach for reasons beyond the control of UNFPA.

137 See Box 21 of the Myanmar country case study report.

Table 24. Examples of partnerships with external stakeholders in regional offices

Regional Office	Partnerships with External Stakeholders
<b>Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office</b>	<p>The long-standing partnership between the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office and the Population Division (named CELADE) of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) was crucial to facilitating the implementation of the 2010 census round. Since 2007, UNFPA has had a formal Cooperation Agreement with CELADE, with the two organizations operating on the basis of a joint work plan, inclusive of census work.</p> <p>During the 2010 census round, the partnership expanded to include the census group of the Statistical Conference of the Americas (SCA), a subsidiary body of ECLAC. The SCA-ECLAC-UNFPA partnership in Latin America is an example of a census-based regional partnership. During the 2010 census round, the partnership emphasized the inclusion of ethnicity in censuses.</p>
<b>East and Southern Africa Regional Office</b>	<p>The East and Southern Africa Regional Office adopted a partnership to address the problem of 'ageing' of census expertise. The regional offices worked with the African Union and other regional organizations to attract young demographers and involve them in technical assistance. Additionally, UNFPA funded a regional demography centre in Cameroon, enabling young demographers to visit various countries and gain exposure to different countries' approaches.</p>
<b>Asia and the Pacific Regional Office</b>	<p>The Asia and the Pacific Regional Office partnered with other regional organizations during the 2010 census round in order to broaden its outreach in capacity development activities. For example, the Regional Office collaborated with the Japan-based Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (an entity of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) to deliver capacity development activities.</p>
<b>Subregional Office for the Caribbean</b>	<p>The Subregional Office for the Caribbean worked closely with regional entities such as CARICOM (a political body bringing together all countries in the subregion) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (with whom joint work was done to ensure that common census methods were utilized, thus enabling cross-country comparability).<sup>138</sup></p>

*Opportunities for South-South cooperation to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and lessons learned*

**UNFPA support to census featured the facilitation of primarily demand-driven technical exchanges, which were highly valued by NSOs.** This is in keeping with the UNFPA South-South cooperation strategy 2010–2013, which underscores that “all UNFPA South-South Cooperation initiatives should be nationally owned and demand driven ... and may involve exchanges of knowledge, expertise and technologies” (among other types of exchanges).<sup>139</sup>

**The ability of UNFPA to promote South-South cooperation exchanges was seen by NSOs as an institutional asset.** Seventy-five per cent of NSOs responding to the NSO survey considered that facilitating the exchange of experience among countries is a unique strength or advantage of the UNFPA support to census. Ninety-seven per cent of the UNFPA country offices responding to the country office survey thought the same. Indeed, country offices consider that facilitation of exchange among countries

is the major UNFPA strength in the census (together with the provision of quality technical assistance).

NSO survey results are particularly compelling on this aspect. Half of the NSOs that reported not having received support from UNFPA in this area still viewed the facilitation of exchanges of experience with other countries as a unique strength of UNFPA. Similarly, in an open-ended question nearly half of the NSOs (26) explicitly mentioned that UNFPA was particularly successful in South-South cooperation.<sup>140</sup> Eighty per cent of NSO respondents that reported having worked with other countries' NSOs shared that UNFPA played a role in arranging the exchange.<sup>141</sup>

Table 25 summarizes the results of the 26 NSOs that provided further details on the type of exchanges that occurred. The table confirms that UNFPA played a role in promoting exchanges between countries and highlights that South-South exchanges follow an inter-

138 Information retrieved from interviews with key informants at the regional level and a documentary review within the regional component of the evaluation.

139 Page 2 of the UNFPA South-South cooperation strategy 2010-2013, dated January 2011 and included in the UNFPA Policies and Procedures Manual. question and not a multiple-choice question increases the significance of the response.

140 The question asked: “in your opinion how successful was the UNFPA in its various roles?” Respondents were provided a series of multiple choice answers (technical assistance, advocacy for the census, fund mobilization, financial, support, services delivery) and an opportunity to write their reply in an open fashion (others).

141 Thirty-three NSOs of the 41 answering that question.

regional pattern. This evidence corroborates findings in case studies and extended desk reviews. **However, South-South cooperation as a modality of support remains quite limited in scope, rarely featuring inter-regional cooperation.** The exception to this was UNFPA support to the Brazilian South-South cooperation strategy, which involved cooperation with the West and Central Africa region. Most exchanges took place between countries with historical and cultural ties, suggesting that these existing ties were at the base of the exchange. Most case studies and extended desk reviews (e.g. Indonesia, Kenya, Mauritania, Myanmar and Peru) point to a general absence of South-South cooperation strategies and suggest that South-South cooperation is an unexplored strategy of support in delivering technical assistance (with the exception of the Egypt-Iraq example explored in Box 21).

Table 25 includes all types of exchanges between NSOs in which UNFPA played a role. Exchanges include

both those occurring between programme countries/ South-South cooperation (in black) as well as North-South exchanges (in red). Capital letters designate inter-regional exchanges.

It is evident that South-South cooperation was supported in the implementation of the 2010 census. However, the evidence provided suggests that South-South cooperation could have played a **greater role as outlined in UNFPA Strategic Plans for the period under evaluation.** As expressly stressed in the Strategic Plan 2008–2011, “UNFPA will mainstream modalities to support South-South cooperation through enhanced use of local capacities and as a means to share best practices.”<sup>142</sup> Moreover, the Plan’s national capacity development section stresses: “UNFPA will support national capacity to design and implement evidence-based policies ... This will be complemented by strengthening South-South knowledge transfer through regional support to serve the needs of programme countries.”<sup>143</sup>

**Table 25. Exchanges of experiences where UNFPA played a role**

REGIONS						
	Asia and the Pacific	Arab States	East and South-ern Africa	Eastern Europe and Central Asia	Latin America and the Carib-bean	Western and Central Africa
Partner countries	Australia Thailand UNITED STATES Japan Korea	ETHIOPIA	Mozambique	Belarus	Chile Bolivia Haiti	BRAZIL Capo-Verde
	Australia		Regional metings	Kazakhstan	Chile Paraguay Venezuela Dominicana	Burkina-Faso Others in region- al meetings
	Indonesia		SACD countries	Lithuania Poland Kazakhstan Ireland	Ecuador Columbia	BRAZIL
	Cambodia Viet-Nam		South-Africa Kenya	Poland France Romania	CANADA	SOUTH-AFRICA Capo-Verde Senegal
	China Philippine IRAN Malaysia Indonesia		South-Sudan	Ukraine Belarus Russia Tajikistan	Trinidad and Tobago	Institute for Demographic Training and Research Cameroon
<b>Total:</b> 26	5	1	5	5	5	5

Source: NSO survey. Each cell corresponds to a unique answer by a country. In line with the survey’s confidentiality procedure, respondent names are not shown.

142 Paragraph 36, implementation approaches section, of the Strategic Plan 2008-2011.

143 Paragraph 81 of the Strategic Plan 2008-2011.

The 2010 census round featured some highly innovative and cutting-edge approaches to South-South cooperation, such as support to an innovative South-South technical assistance strategy between Iraq and Egypt (see Box 21). In addition, UNFPA enabled the development of a national South-South cooperation strategy in Brazil in response to the Brazilian NSO desire to share its census knowledge and experience with other countries, particularly developing countries. Towards this end, UNFPA provided support to the Brazilian NSO to deliver technical assistance to countries conducting their census (Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, São Tomé e Príncipe and Senegal) and to support centres of excellence for the use of personal digital assistants (PDA) for census data collection in African countries.

The case studies and extended desk reviews revealed that the majority of **South-South cooperation exchanges occurred between NSOs and focused on producing data rather than using data for policymaking.** The UNFPA South-South Cooperation Strategy (developed in 2010) and the Strategic Plan 2014–2017 highlighted as one of five objectives, “engage non-traditional actors, including civil society groups, which includes identifying new partners for South-South cooperation.”<sup>144</sup> Nevertheless, there has been limited evidence to date of engagement with researchers, civil society organizations or the private sector.

The **role of UNFPA regional offices in South-South cooperation** (within regions and even more so between regions) **has been rather modest**, particularly when compared to corporate expectations. The 2008–2011 Strategic Plan mentions the role of regional offices in promoting South-South cooperation,<sup>145</sup> stating that regional programmes “will support national capacity development through South-South cooperation, which UNFPA considers an effective modality for building sustainable national capacities” and further stating “UNFPA will intensify its efforts to use regional and inter-regional resources towards utilizing South-South knowledge, lessons learned and experiences.”<sup>146</sup>

Some sporadic initiatives took place during the period, such as an online South-South cooperation platform put in place by the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office.<sup>147</sup> Operative for a period of time, the platform was recently discontinued for unclear reasons, risking generating unfulfilled expectations from key partners in programme countries.<sup>148</sup> Regional office support to South-South cooperation has not, as of yet, fully aligned with the strategy outlined in the UNFPA Business Model despite the context of greater demand

**Box 21. Egypt-Iraq-UNFPA: an example of a South-South cooperation scheme as a fully-fledged technical assistance support to census**

In order to ensure continual support rather than hire international short-term consultants, UNFPA in Iraq decided to establish partnerships for census (with another country). A protocol of cooperation was signed between the Iraqi and Egyptian governments. UNFPA funded training and NSO staff missions and organized the cooperation with the Egypt NSO (CAPMAS). Cooperation benefited both countries: the NSO in Iraq gained experience and capacity in undertaking a census, including optical data capture, and CAPMAS was afforded the opportunity to review its procedures, taking into account lessons learned from the 2006 census. The chief technical adviser provided quality assurance.

for increased regional office involvement in South-South cooperation.<sup>149</sup> Illustrating this, one-third of country offices responding to the country office survey explicitly called for regional offices to play a more active role in South-South cooperation and exchanges of experiences and lessons learned.

The 2010 census round generated an ample array of experiences, lessons and knowledge on census design and implementation. However, knowledge management activities at UNFPA headquarters have not yet prioritized or focused adequately on identifying and conveying relevant experiences on census support.

144 Paragraph 46, Annex 2 - Outcome Theories of Change of the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

145 Paragraph 28 of the 2008-2013 UNFPA Strategic Plan.

146 Paragraph 128 of the 2008-2013 UNFPA Strategic Plan.

147 Available at: <http://ssc.lacrounfpa.org/auth>

148 Reportedly, memorandums of understanding were signed with countries using the platform, but halting the platform implies that they will not be implemented.

149 See paragraphs 37 and 42 of the Business Model (annex) of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

**Evaluation question 6. To what extent does UNFPA support to population and housing census data generation, analysis, dissemination and use add value in comparison to other United Nations agencies and development partners at the national, regional and global levels?**

Summary of Findings:	Added value
<p>UNFPA support to census featured three main comparative strengths: provision of quality technical assistance, credibility to the census process and a convening / bridging role among census stakeholders. Two elements highly associated with the perception of added value of the UNFPA support are its long-standing relationships with national institutions involved in the census (coupled with the ability to build robust partnerships with these institutions) and the collaborative, dialogue-based and cooperative approach adopted by the UNFPA.</p> <p>Two weaknesses were identified, though less sizeable than strengths in magnitude and recurrence. First, UNFPA has not always succeeded in conveying its role, mandate and position vis-à-vis the government to other national stakeholders. Second, there is the perception that UNFPA could have done more to address current flaws at the heart of national statistical systems, generate regular census updates (via sampling), and push for the analysis of disaggregated data.</p> <p>Case studies, extended desk reviews, interviews at the regional and global levels and the results of the surveys point to a shared perception that UNFPA has been a key partner in support to the 2010 census round. There is also a widely held view that without UNFPA support to census, some national censuses would not have been conducted or would have failed to meet international standards.</p>	

*UNFPA comparative strengths in the support to population and housing census data generation, analysis, dissemination and use*

Ninety-six per cent of NSO survey respondents answered positively to the question on whether UNFPA had unique strengths or advantages as compared to other organizations providing census support.<sup>150</sup> Perceptions on the comparative advantage and added value of UNFPA support to census vary considerably across countries and regions. Some reasons for this are that countries included in the evaluation feature a wide array of socioeconomic and sociopolitical contexts, different levels of economic development and government capacities and varying degrees of openness towards civil society. Furthermore, the type of support provided by UNFPA and the number of census stages supported also varied from country to country. All of these aspects made a difference in what comparative strengths stakeholders valued the most and the reasons why.

However, even amid such diversity, **three main areas of strengths stood out irrespective of specific contexts**: the provision of quality technical assistance,

the credibility that UNFPA support adds to the census process and the convening role played by the UNFPA among census stakeholders.

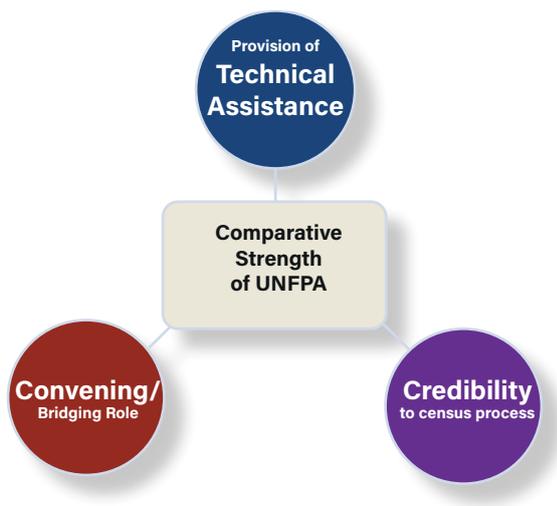
The **provision of quality technical assistance** is by far the most frequently mentioned comparative strength across case studies, extended desk reviews, regional interviews and surveys. As shown in several country case studies, this comparative strength is mentioned not only by NSOs but also by line ministries, donors, civil society and academia.

It is also a comparative strength for which the opinions of NSOs and UNFPA country offices clearly coincide. In both surveys, the provision of quality technical assistance is the highest ranked strength (see Table 26).<sup>151</sup> This is linked to three elements: the broad knowledge base on census of UNFPA, the expertise of UNFPA staff in managing census support, and the ability of the UNFPA to tap into highly technical international census expertise.

<sup>150</sup> Cases with no comparative strengths mentioned were very exceptional, both in case study countries and in extended desk review countries.

<sup>151</sup> Ninety-seven per cent of country offices and 77 per cent of NSOs ranked it as a comparative strength, which is the highest percentage among the twelve strengths ranked in the survey for both country offices and NSOs.

Figure 18. UNFPA main comparative strengths in support to the 2010 census round



All country case studies stress the added value of UNFPA in comparison to other United Nations agencies and development partners in support to population and housing censuses. In the United Nations system, UNFPA is clearly acknowledged as the institution with a speciality in population.

Development partners and national stakeholders highlight the professional and long-standing experience of UNFPA in the domain. The specific expertise of UNFPA in population matters is highly valued, especially its **broad knowledge base on census**,<sup>152</sup> stemming from experiences in a wide range of countries in the application of international census standards (e.g. Cameroon, Indonesia, Kenya, Mauritania, Palestine, Peru, Tajikistan).

UNFPA support to the census through technical assistance is valued both for its **in-house expertise in supporting the census process** and for its role as a **broker of expertise**, that is, for the ability of UNFPA to identify, attract and recruit technical expertise on census (e.g. Myanmar, Palestine, Peru, Tajikistan).

While the provision of quality technical assistance was clearly the main comparative advantage in the 2010 census round, there are a number of emerging challenges.

In regional and case study interviews, some stakeholders pointed out limitations in the census-related technical skills of staff in UNFPA country offices and limitations of those whose capacity is often overstretched. These views may reflect how national stakeholders perceive the recent strategic shift in the UNFPA business model, whereby UNFPA is becoming a broker and facilitator rather than a direct provider of technical assistance. Moreover, some stakeholders consider that UNFPA over-relies

on international external consultants (in contrast with the approach adopted by other United Nations agencies). Similarly, some informants point to the loss of comparative advantage when the regional Country Technical Services Teams were dismantled during the 2010 census round. In Palestine, development partners expressed concern about UNFPA currently having a lower technical profile in terms of census and statistical expertise. These challenges reflect some of the consequences of the process of attrition described in Evaluation Question 4.

The **credibility that UNFPA support offers to the census process** is another frequently mentioned comparative advantage and source of added value, not only by NSOs but also by key informants within academia and civil society. This credibility is associated with the UNFPA role in promoting compliance and alignment with international standards and with quality assurance (ensuring adherence to international census standards for data quality). The quality assurance role of UNFPA is often a reason for the good quality of census data, leading to acceptance by national stakeholders — an aspect that is highly appreciated by NSOs. The UNFPA ability to play a strong role in census quality assurance (and particularly around the appropriate management of funds) was often highlighted as a strength (e.g. Bangladesh, Kenya, Palestine, Peru).

The **convening / bridge building role** of UNFPA throughout the census process is often mentioned as a corporate strength. UNFPA is perceived as having an open attitude to working with civil society and able to convene a wide range of stakeholders beyond the classic institutional circles (such as NSOs and ministries). In-depth interviews with key informants collected across countries point at the neutral attitude of UNFPA as one

#### Box 22. Census expertise in country offices

Census expertise in country offices does not refer to technical expertise on census (e.g. cartography, data processing) but to **census process expertise**, that is, staff that understands the phases of a census, the main concerns and requirements, who can warn governments of the risks and who can convene the aforementioned technical expertise on census. Country office expertise on census means that staff understand the time frames, know the pre-conditions for a census, the management requirements, how to generate awareness in the government about the need for a census, guide the government through the process — often critical due to high turnover in partner governments in general — and play a dialogue and advocacy role (act as conveners, for which they must understand the needs of a census).

152 As pointed out at the end of Evaluation Question 5, UNFPA has not yet capitalized on this broad knowledge base.

of the key factors enabling the organization to play such a strong intermediary role between the government, civil society and other development partners. For example, in Palestine, stakeholders appreciated the appropriate UNFPA response to the complex political and security environment through sensitive, careful dialogue with partners. In South Sudan, the neutrality of the 2010 census contrasted with the politicized nature of the previous census, considered a triggering factor in the 2011 secession of South Sudan.<sup>153</sup>

A key element enabling UNFPA to play a convening role in the census process is that it shows strong respect for national sovereignty and leadership, positioning itself as a facilitator that promotes national ownership of the census and refrains from imposing models. The NSO survey reveals that even countries that did not obtain financial support from UNFPA very positively recognize the role it played in advocating for the census. This is an indicator of the legitimacy of UNFPA as a convener, pointing at the organization's good positioning in this regard.

There are two other elements that appear to be highly associated with the perception of added value of UNFPA support to the 2010 census round. The first is that UNFPA tends to have **long-standing relationships with national institutions** involved in the census (e.g. Bangladesh, Indonesia, Palestine, Peru) and builds **robust partnerships** with them. The permanent in-country presence of UNFPA is a core aspect in this regard. UNECE, for example, underlines the high-profile technical cooperation with UNFPA population and development officers in programme countries. This is seen to result in a long-standing commitment for support, enabling a continuous identification of needs and demands, which is a feature that national and international stakeholders highly value. The fact that census operations take place in a country programmatic framework that also addresses population, health and gender issues provides UNFPA with the appropriate institutional linkages. Kick-off discussions on census attract government and donor attention partly because the UNFPA country office has been long cooperating with ministries dealing with population issues that require updated census data.

The second element is related to the fact that UNFPA rarely works in isolation and delivers census support in an open, **collaborative and cooperative fashion** that is highly appreciated. UNFPA is seen not as an organization that imposes models or pressures governments, but rather as one that supports governments through consultative and dialogue-based relationships, making use of networks and bridging positions between stakeholders.<sup>154</sup>

Table 26 ranks the perceptions of UNFPA country offices and NSOs responding to the survey on twelve potential comparative strengths of UNFPA support.

The proportion of country offices considering that these are comparative advantages of UNFPA support is higher than the proportion of NSOs considering so. However, the ranking is very similar in both cases. The **provision of quality technical assistance** is seen as a comparative advantage by the highest proportion of UNFPA country offices and NSOs, whereas **managing and administering funds and/or procurement** is seen as a comparative advantage by the lowest percentage of country offices and NSOs.

As presented in evaluation question 4, a sizeable number of NSOs considered UNFPA to be **very successful** in service delivery, including procurement. Table 26 also shows that only a low proportion of respondent NSOs see **managing and administering funds and/or procurement** as a comparative advantage; though UNFPA managed to do a good job in fund management, this is not perceived as a particular strength.<sup>155</sup>

Some case studies, extended desk reviews and regional interviews underscored **the ability of UNFPA to mobilize external funds for the census** as a comparative advantage. The UNFPA regional office in East and Southern Africa highlighted the value of putting in seed money at early stages of a census, where UNFPA is the only agency able to mobilize funds at the onset of a risky and politically sensitive operation. The relatively high commitment of core funding for the census in some countries helped leverage additional donor funds. In countries such as Bangladesh and Myanmar, the critical role of UNFPA as a resource mobilizer was unanimously acknowledged. However, the aggregate picture highlights some nuances.

Only half of the NSOs considered mobilization of external resources for the census a comparative strength, and UNFPA country offices ranked it tenth among twelve possible options. Plausible explanations for this relatively low ranking of external resource mobilization as a strength include 1) NSOs in countries from the yellow and pink quadrants are not beneficiaries of this modality of engagement and 2) country offices frequently point out insufficient funding as a weakness in the 2010 census round.

Through surveys and interviews a **few recurrent weaknesses** were also identified, though they were comparatively less sizeable than strengths in magnitude and frequency. A weakness is that UNFPA does not always succeed in conveying its role, mandate and stance vis-à-vis the government to other national

153 Source: country office survey.

154 Testimonials from open answers to country office survey, country case studies and extended desk reviews.

155 A closer look at the surveys dataset show that NSOs value the assistance of UNFPA when it provides funds for the census. Their judgement is thus conditioned by the mobilization of resources and the sufficiency of the funds. NSOs tend to rank the sufficiency of funds rather than the comparative advantage of UNFPA in managing the funds.

Table 26. Ranking of UNFPA main comparative strengths by country office and National Statistical Offices

What are the main strengths or advantages of UNFPA support to census?	Percentage of country offices answering this was a main strength of UNFPA support to census and ranking		Percentage of NSO answering this was a main strength of UNFPA support to census and ranking	
	Percentage	Ranking (From 1st to 12th)	Percentage	Ranking (From 1st to 12th)
Thorough assessment of needs prior to the census	(79%)	5th	(58%)	5th
Assist in the elaboration of a census project document for fundraising	(72%)	8th - 9th **	(52%)	8th
Assist in the positioning of innovative approaches	(79%)	6th	(54%)	7th
<b>Provision of quality technical assistance</b>	<b>(97%)</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>(77%)</b>	<b>1st</b>
Provision of guidance and technical-political advice	(77%)	7th	(40%)	12th
Mobilization of external resources for the census	(70%)	10th-11th	(50%)	9th
Managing and administering funds and/or procurement	(54%)	12th	(42%)	11th
Facilitating and coordinating among donors and other stakeholders	(72%)	8th-9th **	(56%)	6th
Advocating for acceptance of census results	(70%)	10th -11th	(48%)	10th
Facilitating and strengthening the quality of census data analysis	(89%)	4th	(73%)	3rd
Facilitating and advocating for census data use in policymaking	(95%)	3rd	(63%)	4th
Facilitating exchanges of experiences with other countries	(96%)	2nd	(75%)	2nd

Source: NSO survey and country office survey results.

\*\* The two items have the same position because the percentage of country offices answering that is a comparative strength is the same for both items.

Note: The positions are calculated by ranking the percentages in descending order, that is, from the highest percentage (1st position) to the lowest percentage (12th position). The shaded rows indicate the extreme ranking.

stakeholders (e.g. the UNFPA mandate remained unclear to the media in Tajikistan and to the media and civil society in Myanmar). At times, this resulted in mistrust towards UNFPA. In Mauritania, for example, some suspected that UNFPA support could have unintentional adverse effects on the democratic reform process in the country, because UNFPA could have been perceived as a government collaborator.

The adverse effects of unsuccessfully conveying the UNFPA role may be further exacerbated when the census, a technical statistical operation, also has sociopolitical implications. This often occurs in countries affected by political, ethnic or religion-based conflicts, particularly when UNFPA advocacy and soft-aid transcends the purely technical aspects of census to address sociopolitical discussions and debates.

There are also perceptions that UNFPA could have

done more in some areas, such as overcoming weaknesses at the heart of national statistical systems (including the low use of census-related data in local-level decision-making), the absence of regular census updates (via sampling) and the dearth of accessible microdata (e.g. in Bangladesh, Indonesia and Peru). In other countries, such as Tajikistan, stakeholders pointed out that the UNFPA did not advocate strongly enough for the analysis of disaggregated data, which was highly relevant in the context of decentralization processes that were underway.

### *Stakeholder perceptions of UNFPA as a key partner supporting censuses*

Case studies, extended desk reviews, interviews at the regional and global levels and survey results point to the common view that UNFPA has been a key partner in support to the 2010 census round, particularly at the national level. NSOs consider UNFPA as the key country-level partner on population census. UNFPA support to census is less visible at the subnational level.

The evaluation team systematically probed stakeholders on the counterfactual, that is, what they thought would have happened without UNFPA support.<sup>156</sup> The opinions of global and regional stakeholders on what would have occurred without UNFPA support mostly coincide with findings at the country level and may be summarized as follows:<sup>157</sup>

- National censuses would have either not taken place or their quality would have failed to meet international standards (e.g. Mauritania, Myanmar, Palestine), with risks of low acceptance of the results.<sup>158</sup>
- The value of censuses would have not been recognized internationally, and data processing would have taken much more time than it actually did (e.g. Myanmar).
- International external funds would likely not have been obtained (showing the relative value of resource mobilization conducted by UNFPA).
- Demographic projections would likely have not been completed and certain surveys would have not been launched (e.g. projections and thematic reports in Bangladesh, men's health survey in Peru).

Alongside generalized praise for the key role and contribution of UNFPA to census, there were some critical comments, pointing to areas in need of increased support:

- A lack of knowledge exchange, including good practices on census, underscoring the limited role of regional offices in knowledge management.
- The absence of corporate guidance on how to proceed in countries with particularly complex sociopolitical contexts (ethnic, religious or politically challenging contexts). Some donors saw this as an oversight in need of addressing precisely because UNFPA holds a key partner position in programme countries.

- Disproportionately higher support provided at the national level in comparison to subnational levels on the analysis and use of census-related data.
- A higher degree of innovation was expected from UNFPA as the key partner to census in a technologically driven field such as data production. Half of the NSOs responding to the surveys (having received support from UNFPA) considered that assisting in the positioning of innovative approaches was not a UNFPA comparative advantage.

156 These are subjective estimates by means of comparison to the past or to other countries and were considered indications of a counterfactual. Nonetheless, they provide proxies for UNFPA added value.

157 Sources: interviews of the World Bank, DFID, Regional offices, United Nations regional commissions (UNECE, ECLAC), CARICOM, Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

158 Sources: country office survey open answers, stakeholder surveys in Bangladesh and Indonesia, examples from country case studies and extended desk reviews.

### Evaluation question 7. To what extent has UNFPA support contributed to mainstreaming gender equality and human rights in census processes?

Summary of Findings:

Effectiveness

In most of the countries analysed, UNFPA contributed significantly to the use of a gender equality and human rights lens in census. UNFPA advocated for the inclusion of a gender dimension in the census questionnaire as well as questions related to sexual reproductive health and rights and to disability.

UNFPA ensured that gender aspects were included in the instructions and trainings for enumerators and that translations to local minority languages were available. Similarly, UNFPA supported the production of thematic reports on gender analysis, youth, elderly and disability using census data.

Due to a lack of guidance at the global corporate level, knowledge of and ability to implement international recommendations related to specific topics such as disability or ethnicity varied across countries. For example, the approach to consulting vulnerable groups and ethnic minorities differed from the recommendations. In certain situations, such as in Myanmar, UNFPA had to react to government decisions that violated the rights of some ethnic groups.

#### *Integration of gender equality issues into the 2010 census round*

UNFPA integrated a strong focus on gender equality into its support to the 2010 census round. In most of the countries analysed in depth,<sup>159</sup> the population and development and the gender units of the country office worked **together** to ensure that gender equality was duly taken into consideration in the census and that the census support programme was aligned with the national gender programme. This was the case in Indonesia: though the gender monograph is the responsibility of the gender unit, both the gender and population and development units provided methodological inputs. In Kenya, the UNFPA gender adviser participated in meetings of the population and development unit with national partners to discuss how to integrate gender issues. In Palestine, UNFPA developed an ambitious programme on gender immediately following the 2007 census, taking the opportunity to raise gender awareness.

Gender-based stereotypes can introduce serious biases in census data and conclusions drawn based on the data.<sup>160</sup> For example, one bias is premised on the idea that women are simply homemakers and are thus not part of the economically active population. Similarly, the notion that only men can be heads of the household affects the way questions have been

#### **Box 23. The example of Bangladesh**

In Bangladesh, challenges arose around the inclusion of gender-related questions in the census, including 'are you separated?' or 'how many times have you married?', as well as questions around polygamy. However, through UNFPA advocacy and technical inputs provided by the CTA, these questions were included in the long form questionnaire (used only on a sample of the population), indicating a step forward for the 2011 census. Questions on women's ownership of assets and participation in the labour force were also included in the long form. National experts consider the long form to be quite gender-sensitive, allowing for the measurement of women's empowerment.

designed and asked in censuses. These stereotypes also affect the way respondents reply to the questions. It is therefore important to pay attention to gender issues throughout the census process, from questionnaire design to fieldwork and dissemination. Indeed, the census questionnaire form is the first element of the census in which to apply a gender lens. To allow for a

159 Mauritania, Palestine, Peru, and Kenya.

160 United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, rev. 2, p. 51. 2008. New York.

sound gender analysis, the census form should include adequate questions, not only on the sex of respondents, but also on female economic activity, education and fertility.

In the questionnaires of Kenya, Mauritania and Myanmar, UNFPA advocated for the inclusion of maternal mortality as a gender-specific topic. However, statistical measurement of maternal mortality raises two difficulties — the complex definition and the sensitivity of the topic — that require specific training for enumerators.<sup>161</sup> Its inclusion in the census can be justified only in the absence of specific surveys, such as demographic and health surveys, which are more appropriate to determine maternal mortality ratios.

The United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses state that “there is a high risk of misclassifying women as homemakers when only basic questions are asked.”<sup>162</sup> Generally, **UNFPA played an important role in making sure that census questionnaires took into consideration those recommendations** (see Box 24). The results of the country office survey corroborate this finding: 72 per cent of the UNFPA country offices answering the country office survey reported advocating for the inclusion of gender-specific information in the census questionnaire.<sup>163</sup> Additionally, the NSO survey confirmed that UNFPA successfully provided technical assistance on gender issues in more than one-fourth of the countries.<sup>164</sup>

The definition and formulation of questions on

**Box 24. Enumerators and preconceptions on gender - United Nations principles and recommendations**

International recommendations stress that:

“Enumerators and even respondents may simply take for granted the assumption that no woman can be the head of any household that also contains an adult male, whereas the household and economic roles of women are changing. It is therefore important that clear instructions be provided to avoid the complications of enumerator or respondent preconceptions on the subject.”

Source: UNITED NATIONS Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, rev. 2, p. 130. 2008. New York.

**Box 25. Gender bias issues and the selection of field staff in a census: United Nations Principles and Recommendations**

Regarding selection and training of field workers, the Principles and Recommendations also state:

“Particular attention will need to be given to the selection, training and supervision of the field staff. This involves ensuring that both men and women are recruited to the field staff (both as interviewers and supervisors) and that manuals and training materials cover gender bias issues just as they do other important sources of error.”

Source: UNITED NATIONS Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, rev. 2, p. 51. 2008. New York.

household composition are also good indicators of the degree of a country’s gender awareness. In Peru, the formulation of the 2007 questionnaire was gender biased. In preparing for the 2017 census, UNFPA is proactively working with the NSO to develop a more neutral way of recording household composition and, specifically, head of household.

In line with the Principles and Recommendations, **UNFPA advocated for the inclusion of gender considerations in field worker trainings in some countries** (see Box 25). For example, enumerators and supervisors were advised on the importance of recording female economic activity or the household composition in a gender-neutral way. Such advocacy was conducted either directly by the UNFPA CTA (based in the country) or indirectly through the revision of methodology documents and procedures produced by the NSO (Bangladesh, Mauritania, Myanmar and Palestine). However, UNFPA could have paid more attention to this issue operationally, as only 22 per cent of the NSOs surveyed reported that UNFPA successfully supported the training of enumerators on gender and human rights issues.

In most of the countries analysed,<sup>165</sup> **UNFPA pushed for equality in the number of male and female enumerators and supervisors selected.** However, in the majority of these countries, it was not possible to obtain the exact distribution of enumerators and supervisors by sex, as it was not recorded. This suggests the low priority and lack of consideration given to this issue (and its significance as a proxy of quality). In

161 As defined by WHO, maternal death is the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes. See: [http://apps.who.int/gho/indicatorregistry/App\\_Main/view\\_indicator.aspx?iid=26](http://apps.who.int/gho/indicatorregistry/App_Main/view_indicator.aspx?iid=26)

162 United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, rev. 2, p. 156. 2008. New York.

163 Survey to country offices: 33 country offices of 40 answering this specific question.

164 By 28 per cent of the NSOs that responded to the survey.

165 Bangladesh, Kenya, Mauritania, Palestine and Peru.

Peru, no special advocacy efforts were undertaken in this realm due to the tight schedule for enumeration, but it was reported that the majority of enumerators were female. In Mauritania, around 55 per cent of the enumerators were female: UNFPA advocated for the recruitment of women as enumerators despite the fact that the long distances to cover during the enumeration worked against their appointment in certain areas.

In order to provide evidence on the situation of gender equality in a country, **UNFPA promoted a systematic gender breakdown in the dissemination of census results and supported the inclusion of monographs or thematic reports on gender** in dissemination plans, including funding many of these reports.<sup>166</sup> The results of the country office survey corroborate this support: 54 per cent of country offices that responded to the survey reported providing technical assistance for the inclusion of gender issues in tabulation, and 44 per cent reported having provided training for the same purpose. However, as mentioned previously, only 28 per cent of respondents from NSOs reported that UNFPA provided technical assistance on gender issues. This apparent discrepancy can, in part, be explained because many of the NSOs in countries where country offices reported providing technical assistance on gender did not reply to the survey.

In order to support the preparation of thematic reports, **UNFPA aimed at building the capacity of NSOs to perform gender analysis**, in relation with the UNFPA country programme on gender. For example, following the census in Palestine, a series of actions, including training, were carried out to strengthen the capacity of the NSO (the PCBS) and line ministries to perform gender analysis. In Bangladesh, a training was organized for the NSO on gender and sex (as concepts), gender-based violence and the legal framework, and gender statistical analysis.

The lack of NSO capacity to conduct gender analysis is difficult for UNFPA to address in some countries. In Kenya, for example, the Directorate of Population and Social Statistics of the NSO, responsible for both the census and other specialized research, shared that they have not received direct capacity building or strategic support from UNFPA to build internal expertise in producing specialized analytical reports. The Directorate was not directly involved in the production of the gender monograph, which was outsourced to external consultants at the University of Nairobi.

UNFPA developed some manuals in order to provide guidance on gender analysis. At the global level, the

UNFPA Technical Division produced a manual on gender analysis using census data.<sup>167</sup> This manual was published in 2014 and is available for download on the UNFPA website.<sup>168</sup> It was however, published too late to be fully utilized during the 2010 Census Round. Following the publication of the manual, UNFPA worked in collaboration with UNSD to organize training workshops on gender analysis using census data.

At the regional level, the Asia-Pacific Regional Office published *Genderizing the Census. Strategic approaches to capturing the gender realities of a population* in 2013.<sup>169</sup> Drawing on the experience of South Asian countries, the manual provides census managers with methods to strengthen the gender focus in population

**Box 26. Ethnicity: a highly sensitive question: United Nations Principles and Recommendations**

The Principles and Recommendations consider ethnicity to be a non-core topic, recommending its inclusion in the following manner:

“The decision to collect and disseminate information on ethnic or national groups of a population in a census is dependent upon a number of considerations and national circumstances, including, for example, the national needs for such data, and the suitability and sensitivity of asking ethnicity questions in a country’s census.”

“The subjective nature of the term ... requires that information on ethnicity be acquired through self-declaration of a respondent and also that respondents have the option of indicating multiple ethnic affiliations”

“Owing to the sensitive nature of questions on ethnicity, special care may be required to demonstrate to respondents that appropriate data protection and disclosure control measures are in place. It is important that the responding public be informed of the potential uses and need for data pertaining to ethnicity, as this improves public support for the census exercise. Data on ethnicity provide information on the diversity of a population and can serve to identify subgroups of a population.”

Source: UNITED NATIONS Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2. Page 139.

166 UNFPA funded reports in Indonesia, Kenya (although not yet published), Myanmar, Palestine and Peru. In Bangladesh, a monograph on gender is being developed but has not yet been published.

167 Methodological Guidelines for the Gender Analysis of National Population and Housing Census Data, UNFPA. 2014.

168 Available at: <http://www.unfpa.org/publications/methodological-guidelines-gender-analysis-national-population-and-housing-census-data>

169 Genderizing the Census. Strategic approaches to capturing the gender realities of a population. UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office. January 2013. <http://asiapacific.unfpa.org/publications/genderizing-census-strategic-approaches-capturing-gender-realities-population#sthash.BSwX5Jji.dpuf>

and housing censuses, subsequently improving the quality of census data. It covers all census stages (from planning to data analysis and dissemination), and describes how the gender dimension can be better incorporated at each stage. Unfortunately, based on interviews with key informants in countries studied in the region, the dissemination and promotion of the manual has as of yet not been sufficient to ensure its full use as a guideline.

Beyond the census, **UNFPA also supported the integration of gender equality in national surveys,**

including the Demographic and Health Survey. In Peru, for example, UNFPA supported a survey on time-use and also made an effort to integrate gender into its support to the INEI by initiating innovative surveys directly related to cross-cutting issues, such as the value created by unpaid care work and adolescent pregnancy. In Indonesia and Palestine, UNFPA supported data collection on gender-based violence. In Indonesia, the Demographic and Health Survey included questions on gender-based violence while in Palestine a specific survey focused on gender was undertaken.

*Integration of UNFPA human rights, rights of vulnerable groups, minorities (including ethnic minorities) and of the disabled in the support to the 2010 census round and associated surveys.*

**UNFPA successfully integrated human rights, including the rights of vulnerable groups, minority groups and those with disabilities in its support to the 2010 Census Round.**

UNFPA made sure that the census questionnaire included relevant issues related to human rights. Half of the respondents to the country office survey reported providing technical assistance on the inclusion of human rights issues in the census questionnaire,<sup>170</sup> though only 15 per cent of the NSOs surveyed reported that UNFPA successfully supported the inclusion of human rights issues in the questionnaire.

UNFPA advocated for the inclusion of questions related to disability and sexual and reproductive health, including maternal mortality.<sup>171</sup> It should be noted that the **recommendations of the United Nations Washington Group** (included in the United Nations recommendations for the 2010 census round),<sup>172</sup> **were not systematically taken into account** in formulating questions on disability.<sup>173</sup> These recommendations — based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health of the World Health Organization — were developed to improve the framework through which disability is understood. The insufficient use and integration of the recommendations raises concerns on the role of UNFPA regional offices and headquarters in disseminating international recommendations at the country level.

In countries with diverse populations and a range of spoken languages, **UNFPA ensured that the census questionnaires were available in local languages** to support the participation of minority groups (in Myanmar and Peru, for example), as recommended by international guidelines.<sup>174</sup> However, there are exceptions, such as Mauritania, where neither the questionnaires nor the instruction manual were officially translated; instead, enumerators provided on-the-spot translation, which could lead to misinterpretation.

To facilitate the participation of the full population in the census, **UNFPA funded information campaigns targeting vulnerable and ethnic groups.** These campaigns shared information on the census purpose, the process, the rights of the population vis-à-vis the census and, in several countries, information on confidentiality and data protection.<sup>175</sup> For example, in Moldova, UNFPA financed an innovative youth informational campaign called Door-to-Door. The campaign was implemented in 16 districts of the country, with a focus on vulnerable groups and minorities. Indirectly, this campaign reached approximately one third of the population. In Latin America, UNFPA supported seminars to exchange experience with other countries on the enumeration of indigenous populations.

To develop an analysis of the situation of specific populations (including vulnerable groups), thereby

170 Country office survey (see description in Annex 11).

171 At least 16 countries in Africa, three in Latin America, 11 in Asia and four in Oceania included a question on maternal mortality in their census (Source: UNSD).

172 United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, revision 2. Page 246. New York. 2008.

173 In Myanmar and Palestine, questions on disability were formulated following the recommendations of the Washington Group, but not in Kenya, Mauritania, Peru or Rwanda.

174 Principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses, rev. 2, para. 1.187: "Special provision will have to be made if two or more languages are used in the country. Several methods have been used to deal with this situation, such as (a) a single, multilingual questionnaire; or (b) one version of the questionnaire for each major language; or (c) translations printed in the enumerators' manual of the questionnaire in the various languages."

175 Mauritania, Moldova, Myanmar and Romania, among others (source: Evaluation Office Survey to country offices).

enabling targeted policy development, **UNFPA supported the publication of thematic reports on youth, the elderly and those with disabilities**, financing many of these reports. For example, in Rwanda, UNFPA supported the publication of thematic reports on the socioeconomic status of people with disabilities, children and youth and the elderly. In Myanmar and Indonesia, UNFPA pushed for the inclusion of thematic reports on disability, children and youth and the elderly in the census dissemination plan.

More generally, in some countries **UNFPA provided support and policy dialogue to help raise awareness among NSOs and governments on the experiences of minorities**. In Mauritania, a specific methodology was designed to enumerate nomadic populations, taking into consideration their specific conditions of living, in order to ensure their inclusion in the census. In Palestine, UNFPA cooperated with the NSO, UNICEF and more recently OCHA to identify the best approach to surveying the scope of humanitarian needs for communities under Israeli administrative

control in Area C of the West Bank. There have been continuous discussions about whether specialized tools or methods are or will be required to gather more detailed data on the situation of refugees, the Bedouin population or other vulnerable groups within the overall rights context.

In Myanmar, despite difficulties surrounding the inclusion of an ethnicity question in the census, UNFPA contributed to a shift in mindset on the rights of minorities, encouraging the government to establish a dialogue with ethnic groups. Moreover, UNFPA insisted on the establishment of a National Advisory Committee (a highly sensitive context in Myanmar) to hold consultations with civil society organizations and ethnic groups on the census.<sup>176</sup> Though a positive advancement, the Advisory Committee was established only a few months prior to enumeration, which was too late to genuinely influence decisions on the census process. The delay may have been caused in part by the lack of UNFPA standardized guidelines on census governance and on how to organize consultations with (and authentically include) representatives from

**Table 27. Different approaches to ethnicity in the census: experiences from the case studies**

<b>Different approaches on ethnicity in the census: the cases of Kenya, Peru, Myanmar and Rwanda</b>	
<b>Kenya</b>	UNFPA was able to provide a trusted adviser and play a mediation role in discussions between development partners and the government on the inclusion of ethnicity in the census questionnaire. Some stakeholders credited UNFPA with providing neutral advice on this issue (partly via the UNFPA East and Southern Africa regional office) and helping to achieve a final decision agreed to by all.
<b>Peru</b>	The census did not record ethnicity for 50 years, not because of sociopolitical sensitivities but because its collection was considered at odds with universal citizenship within a republic. "Interculturality" (ethnicity in policy and practice) is now a priority area of country office support. Though UNFPA worked to ensure that the Peruvian NSO followed regional standards in registering ethnicity in the census form, UNFPA has not been the main agent of change. Indeed, the push to include ethnic indicators in the census form came from indigenous people. Both UNFPA and indigenous organizations sit on the Advisory Board for the 2017 Peruvian census. It is likely that a new question on ethnic self-identification ( <i>autoadscripción</i> or <i>autoatribución</i> ) will be included in the 2017 census alongside the existing question on native language.
<b>Myanmar</b>	There was strong government support for the inclusion of ethnicity in the census questionnaire in Myanmar. However, UNFPA underestimated the sensitivity surrounding the inclusion of ethnicity, despite various indications that the inclusion of ethnicity might be problematic: the direct impact of census results on political representation, the results of the political risk assessment commissioned by UNFPA and the results of the pilot census. In particular, there was a divergence between the broad concept of ethnicity (understood as self-determined and not limited to a predefined list as specified in the international recommendations) and the concept of 'national races' mentioned in the Constitution, which officially recognizes only predefined groups as nationals.  Moreover, in Myanmar, UNFPA was inconsistent in its position on the inclusion of ethnicity at the country and regional levels. As a consequence, UNFPA had to develop a series of reaction measures, in particular after government's decision to exclude one ethnic group from the census.
<b>Rwanda</b>	In some countries, ethnicity required extremely careful evaluation of the risks and benefits of its inclusion. Rwanda, 20 years after the genocide, is an example of a context in which there remains a high sensitivity around ethnicity. The question was not included in the 2012 census.

176 The National Advisory Committee is led by the Government of Myanmar, though UNFPA convenes it and provides funding.

vulnerable groups and ethnic minorities in the census.

**Though UNFPA played an important role in promoting a balanced approach in some countries, its approach to the inclusion of ethnicity in census questionnaires was inconsistent, failing, at times, to follow international guidelines.** Ethnicity questions can provide useful information on minorities and vulnerable groups, but, according to international recommendations, should only be included in census questionnaires if there is a need for the data nationally and the question is not sensitive (see Box 26).<sup>177</sup> On the latter, if there is a risk of ethnic groups being targeted or excluded, or if the distribution of ethnic groups in a population has a direct impact on political representation or civil rights, then the inclusion of ethnicity can jeopardize the quality and feasibility of the census and potentially contribute to broader societal unrest.

At present, UNFPA does not have a well-established **institutional position on the question of ethnicity or religion** to guide census operations in contexts where technical decisions and results may have particularly sensitive sociopolitical implications. The lack of UNFPA-wide guidance on these issues contributed to the observed inconsistency in the ways that ethnicity was approached. Additionally, UNFPA does not systematically collect country experiences on these sensitive issues, though country offices could benefit from the lessons learned in other countries.

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177 United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, rev. 2, p. 139. 2008. New York.

## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

This section presents a set of conclusions and recommendations to UNFPA business units. Conclusions are based on the analysis of the main findings; recommendations are centred on and follow from the conclusions developed. Recommendations are organized in three thematic clusters: 1) consolidate the position of UNFPA on population and housing censuses; 2) exploit the full potential of census data; and 3) mobilize new resources for the census.

### 4.1. Conclusions

CONCLUSION 1	A key contributor to the 2010 census round
Overall, the contribution of UNFPA support to the 2010 census round has been largely positive, highly relevant and delivered efficiently. The contribution of UNFPA to strengthening national capacities for the production and availability of data is quite robust and underpins UNFPA support to the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development agenda.	
<b>Origin:</b> Evaluation Questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7	

UNFPA support to the 2010 census round clearly contributed to the availability of census data worldwide. Through, *inter alia*, UNFPA support, both the number of countries conducting a census and the number of people enumerated in the 2010 round have increased (vis-à-vis the 2000 census round), particularly in Africa (e.g. Burundi, Ethiopia, Liberia and Sudan did not have a census during the 2000 census round) and in countries with challenging sociopolitical contexts in the Asia Pacific region (e.g. Myanmar and Timor-Leste).

UNFPA support to the 2010 round was highly relevant, demonstrating strong alignment with government priorities, plans, strategies and needs for data. In the majority of countries analysed in depth, there is a perception that without UNFPA support the census would have not taken place. The UNFPA role in creating an enabling environment conducive to census conduct — through resource mobilization, technical advice and policy dialogue — stands out in this regard.

Support to the 2010 census round has been characterized by an overall efficient management of funds and strong adaptability whenever challenges have been encountered. As a result, censuses were conducted in a timely manner, even under the most challenging of circumstances. The way in which UNFPA delivered 2010 census round support has also been characterized by

strategic networking, particularly at the country level. The use of partnerships, in particular, contributed to smooth implementation and, at times, resulted in cost savings and the optimization of available resources. Additionally, UNFPA support to census in the 2010 round proved essential to the inclusion of gender equality considerations throughout the census process, from the design of enumeration questionnaires to the publication of thematic analysis reports. Support has also been, on the whole, sensitive to and effective in including human rights considerations in the census process.

Enhancing national capacity for the production and availability of census data was at the core of UNFPA support to the 2010 census round. There is conclusive evidence that UNFPA support contributed to enhancing the capacities of NSOs for the production of census data in line with international standards. Such improvements have, on the whole, proved sustainable, particularly when certain conditions were met (e.g. when technical assistance was performed as knowledge transfer or when census operations and procedures were thoroughly documented). Enhanced capacity has also proved more sustainable when involving technologies or skills that can be used during the intercensal period, for example, in the design of questionnaires or the application of data capture technologies.

CONCLUSION 2	Strategic positioning as a census player worldwide
UNFPA was strategically positioned during the 2010 census round worldwide. The organization was well-placed within the United Nations system to work with partner governments and other development partners, taking on a lead convening role in the field of population and housing censuses. Despite this, support to census ranks rather modestly among UNFPA global strategic priorities and is not fully reflected in the current Strategic Plan. This may potentially undermine the delivery of Outcome Four due to inadequate investment of corporate resources and capacities.	
<b>Origin:</b> Evaluation Questions 2, 4 and 6	

UNFPA is unanimously recognized as a key player in population and housing censuses worldwide. This positioning is explained by the perception of legitimacy of UNFPA among census-related agencies and/or development partners. UNFPA is the only UN organization with long-established, in-house census capacity on the ground. Furthermore, key stakeholders

recognize UNFPA as an important player and convener in the field of population and housing censuses and as a guarantor of the census operation. Some of the key explanatory factors behind this are its long-standing partnership strategy with NSOs and ministries (mostly ministries of planning, health, education, culture and gender), its long-standing technical mandate on population and development issues and its in-country presence and internal expertise.

Partner governments and development partners recognize UNFPA as an organization with a strong mandate on issues related to population and development data, affording UNFPA a distinctive convening role in the census process. At the country level, the UNFPA role in supporting census is often seen as a flagship of UNFPA support. Though UNFPA is viewed from the outside as a prominent and prestigious global player in census support, census support ranks rather modestly among UNFPA global strategic priorities.

Support to the 2010 census round was not fully operationalized in the UNFPA Special Initiative on Census (which was dismantled prior to the end of the census round); the support it provided was rather diffuse. Moreover, there is currently no formal corporate guidance on census support. These factors, together with the fact that UNFPA support suffered from an ongoing process of attrition in internal census expertise (particularly at the regional and global levels), limited the full potential of census to inform national-level policy formulation.

Additionally, despite the importance of census to advancing Outcome Four of the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan, the Strategic Plan neither captures the full range of census support activities undertaken by UNFPA nor accurately reflects the weight census holds (in some cases) at the country level. Failing to adequately capture and reflect the entirety of UNFPA support to census poses risks, including inadequate financial and human resource investment by UNFPA for census support, compromising the ability to achieve Outcome Four. The 2010 census round has generated a wealth of experience and learning for UNFPA as both implementer and convener in an array of UNFPA support settings. However, though crucial to enhancing effective support to the 2020 census round, neither regional offices nor headquarters have systematically captured or organized good practices on census for learning.

### CONCLUSION 3

#### Concerns on internal expertise and human resources

UNFPA institutional positioning in census is strongly associated with the expertise of its staff. However, there are important internal human resource imbalances and structural dysfunctions within UNFPA when it comes to census support.

**Origin:** Evaluation Questions 2, 4 and 6

Census knowledge and expertise of UNFPA staff is a key asset. It explains, in part, donor trust in UNFPA: donors often link their confidence in the ability of UNFPA to manage census financial contributions with UNFPA census expertise. UNFPA staff knowledge and expertise on census also explains the well-received role of the organization as a convener, as it confers upon UNFPA the technical legitimacy to bring together a range of stakeholders in the context of census preparation and implementation.

National and regional stakeholders perceive UNFPA staff census expertise as critical for developing national capacity in programme countries where such support is needed. Despite this, internal expertise has been substantially depleted throughout the 2010 census round; capacity is now uneven across UNFPA.

UNFPA internal census expertise was substantially reduced after Country Technical Services Teams were dismantled in 2008. Following this, human resources at the regional office level were inadequate vis-à-vis the requirements of the regional mandate for census support.

Additionally, headquarters allocated insufficient human resources to support census and data use—despite the clear need for UNFPA-wide guidance and expert technical assistance. The SIC was put in place at the headquarters level, but it ended before it consolidated its position at the regional level and before its intended outcomes became sustainable. Staff with census expertise were not replenished at headquarters once the SIC ended.

The lack of consolidation of the SIC and the human resource gap at the headquarters level had two consequences: first, a lack of corporate guidance, including a dearth of guidelines and advice on technical and political matters related to the census, and a lack of an organized and systematized corporate backstopping system. As a result, census support relied mostly on individual capacity rather than on an institutionalized, systematic approach.

There are currently indications that a considerable number of population and development officers lack adequate capacity in statistics, demography and census expertise. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that country-level expertise gaps are rarely addressed with human resources from regional and headquarters

levels. This is particularly problematic when censuses are conducted in politically sensitive contexts, as cultural sensitivity and other competencies beyond technical expertise play crucial roles.

CONCLUSION 4	Focus on data production and availability versus a focus on data use
<p>The 2010 census round had a pre-eminent focus on enhancing the production of census-related data, placing disproportionately less attention on data dissemination, analysis and use in policymaking despite the centrality of data dissemination and use in the current UNFPA Strategic Plan and in the International Conference on Population and Development.<sup>178</sup></p>	
<p><b>Origin:</b> Evaluation Questions 2 and 3</p>	

While there are individual examples of capacity development activities for the use of census-related data, these do not correspond to an overall trend. Moreover, capacity development activities tend to focus on central government stakeholders (NSOs, ministries) rather than on local governments, CSOs (for policy advocacy), academia or the private sector. Support to the 2010 census round focused primarily on strengthening national capacity for the production and availability of data. The dissemination phase has been, on the whole, weak, despite the importance of support to data dissemination (and use) to advance UNFPA outcomes (as outlined in the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan). Consultations with users for the dissemination phase have, in most cases, reproduced standard supply-based dissemination plans, without examining the specific needs of data users and overlooking issues of access to raw and microdata.

Similarly, UNFPA advocacy for and support to dissemination technologies has been under-ambitious. Beyond support to existing tools (such as REDATAM) or to the development of CensusInfo (in partnership with UNSD and UNICEF), UNFPA did not promote innovative tools for dissemination, such as geographic information systems or user-made tabulation software. This, together with a lack of innovation in the structure and format of thematic reports, meant that UNFPA did not maximize the possibilities that more effective dissemination tools could have offered in fostering data use.

Support to the use of census-related data seldom went beyond user–producer workshops. Further, support did not rely on a long-term strategy (one based on a thorough assessment of needs and existing capacities) to develop the analytical capacities of statistical offices, ministries or civil society.

There are a number of reasons to explain this situation. First, there is a rather narrow understanding of the

scope of the census exercise: both UNFPA country offices and NSOs seem to believe that support to census should terminate — or begin to be phased out — after enumeration and prior to the analysis of census data.

Second, because support to data use was disproportionately lower than support to data production, UNFPA support to the 2010 census may have assumed that, once made available, the data generated would automatically be analysed and used for policy development. This has proven not to be the case. Two factors contributed to the low incidence of data use: 1) most ministries and local governments do not have a culture of utilizing statistical data in their planning and policymaking tasks and 2) a lack of personnel with expertise in statistical analysis and data use for policy development. Given this, the data analysis workshops and capacity development activities carried out with UNFPA support were largely insufficient to generate the desired changes.

A third reason explaining the disproportionately less attention paid to data dissemination, analysis and use is the primarily demand-driven nature of UNFPA census support (see Conclusion 8) in a context where national counterparts — especially NSOs — tend to prioritize data production and availability over dissemination and use. This seems to be one of the reasons why UNFPA did not push enough for the development of dissemination strategies or the introduction of new technologies and tools for online dissemination.

The current Strategic Plan emphasizes data dissemination and use generally and specifically within certain outputs (including Output 12 and Output 15). Support to data dissemination and use is essential to advance the implementation of the current Strategic Plan and to a successful 2020 census round.

CONCLUSION 5	Intended versus actual logic of intervention
<p>There are significant differences between the intended intervention (according to the theory of change) and the actual intervention undertaken to support census, with important implications for the current UNFPA Strategic Plan and business model.</p> <p>Obstacles in adopting the UNFPA business model partly explain the comparatively limited focus on the use of data for policymaking in UNFPA support to census, which has resulted in a lower-than expected contribution to the intended outcomes on the use of data for evidence-based policy and programme development.</p>	
<p><b>Origin:</b> Evaluation Questions 1, 2, 3 and 5</p>	

It is clear that the envisaged theory of change, as

178 See objective 12.2 (b), on page 103 of the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference of Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994.

indicated in programmatic documents for the 2010 census round and reconstructed by the evaluation team, did not occur. In order to contribute to evidence-based policymaking at the national level, accelerate implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and advance wider development goals (as framed by UNFPA strategic plans), the theory of change sets out two lines of action: support to national capacity for the production and availability of data and support to national capacity for data analysis and use in evidence-based policy and programming. However, UNFPA support to data analysis and use was disproportionately lower during the 2010 census round, and the expected changes in data analysis and use for policymaking were not seen.

Several reasons explain the disconnect between the **capacity for production and availability** and the **capacity for use**. A conceptual misunderstanding or a narrow framing of the census operation contributes to focus on production and availability (by both UNFPA and NSOs), a challenge exacerbated by a lack of corporate guidance on census support. Indeed, the temporal framework often used to approach the census is too narrow: the census is seen as a periodic, one-off exercise rather than a continuous 10-year national capacity development process. The fact that the intensity of support usually drops off after the publication of the thematic reports is an indication of this.

Further, regional offices and headquarters provided limited technical backstopping to support use. This occurred in a context where country and regional offices tended to have inadequate capacity themselves to support national capacity development on the use of data for policymaking. Finally, inattention to systematic needs assessments and a lack of investment by programme countries and development partners to the full census cycle also contributed to shortcomings in support to data use.

The use of effective knowledge management platforms at the regional and global levels (to share good practices on census, for example) and South-South cooperation (particularly effective in the transfer of technical knowledge) have not been fully explored in the context of census support, despite their emphasis in the current Strategic Plan.

These explanations shed light on the challenges related to the actual application of the current UNFPA business model. The modes of engagement recommended for yellow and pink countries (advocacy and policy dialogue alone) do not reflect the actual strategies needed to promote the use of census-related data and are largely insufficient to enhance capacity for data use. Technical assistance for capacity development is also needed, yet the business model is commonly understood to restrict the use of technical assistance as a mode of engagement in yellow and pink quadrant countries.

Moving from support to the conduct of the census and the dissemination of data (**production and availability of data**) towards the expected outcomes of the Strategic Plan (better national policies that ensure universal access in UNFPA mandate areas) is only possible if census-related data is actually used for evidence-based policymaking. Yet, at present, this link remains weak.

CONCLUSION 6	Quality assurance mechanisms
UNFPA support features good quality assurance mechanisms for the census, including for census governance. However, this is highly variable in practice and these mechanisms are not part of corporate guidance.	
<b>Origin:</b> Evaluation Questions 2, 5, 6 and 7.	

Quality assurance mechanisms include mechanisms related to ensuring and measuring data quality as well as census governance mechanisms. These mechanisms are not only crucial to ensuring the quality of data, but also to guaranteeing the application of United Nations principles (e.g. on equity, national ownership), ensuring both transparency and effective accountability.

UNFPA, particularly at the regional and country levels, plays a significant and distinctive role in not only ensuring that quality assurance mechanisms are in place — including census governance mechanisms — but also in promoting them and advocating for their adoption (e.g. committees to ensure the voice of CSOs and academia in the census process, platforms to facilitate civil society–government dialogue and information campaigns targeting citizens).

Quality assurance mechanisms for data are crucial to guarantee the independence of the census process and results and to infuse donors with confidence. Post-enumeration surveys — a tool to provide an estimation of the coverage of the census — are an example of a quality assurance mechanism for data.

Census governance mechanisms are particularly important in fragile and post-conflict settings. National and international advisory committees, formalized donor coordination mechanisms and outreach campaigns to inform the population are key examples of census governance mechanisms.

However, despite their importance, there are no UNFPA corporate guidelines on when, why, how and in what sequence such quality assurance mechanisms — including mechanisms for census governance — should be established and used. Some countries put them in place whereas others do not, even when country settings are similar. In addition, no common minimum standards have been established and the features and suitability of such mechanisms differ substantially across cases.

This uneven approach to quality assurance is linked to the absence of an *ex-ante* assessment culture on data needs, on national capacity and on risks and implications of censuses in highly complex political contexts. The evaluation identified a lack of culture in conducting systematic capacity assessments to inform and guide the process of identifying internal (within UNFPA) and external (national stakeholders) human resource requirements for census. For example, country data needs assessments and national stakeholder capacity assessments — both on production and use of census-related data — were not systematically undertaken.

CONCLUSION 7	Value for money of UNFPA support
<p>The value for money of UNFPA support to census varies, depending on what is being assessed.</p> <p>Value for money is high for UNFPA support to enhancing national capacity for data production and availability, but low for enhancing national capacity for data use. Value for money could be enhanced if greater attention were paid to the use of data.</p> <p>Value for money is extremely high in terms of the contribution support to census makes to the overall worldwide strategic positioning of UNFPA. Additionally, support to census (that is, support to the production, availability and use of data for evidence-based policymaking) also facilitates the ability of UNFPA to deliver on all other outcomes of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan.</p>	
<p><b>Origin:</b> Evaluation Questions 4 and 6.</p>	

Value for money arguments impact donor decisions to fund or continue to fund census activities. The value for money of UNFPA support to census varies. It is relatively low when the focus is on dissemination and use of data for evidence-based policymaking, yet increases substantially when the focus shifts to the production and availability of data. This is the case for census support provided through core and non-core funds.

Value for money is remarkably strong when considering corporate value. Though roughly only 1 per cent of total UNFPA core funding was spent to support census from 2005 to 2015, census support generates considerable added value in overall UNFPA strategic positioning worldwide. In other words, although census expenditure is quite modest, support to census nonetheless confers upon UNFPA an important strategic positioning in partner countries above and beyond the support's impact on data production and use. In addition, support to census (production, availability and use of data for evidence-based policymaking) amplifies the ability of UNFPA to deliver on all other outcomes of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan, further strengthening the value for

money of UNFPA support to census.

Currently, UNFPA reporting procedures are not granular enough to capture expenditure in support of census or the type of support provided (e.g. production and availability of census data or the use of census data for policymaking). This prevents UNFPA from monitoring Outcome Four of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan in a way that could inform a more detailed value for money analysis of UNFPA support to census.

CONCLUSION 8	Demand-driven support, a positive feature with some limits
<p>UNFPA support to census is highly demand-driven. This is a positive feature of UNFPA support, as it generates national ownership and leadership. However, there are also risks associated with this approach in the absence of high-quality and timely needs assessments.</p>	
<p><b>Origin:</b> Evaluation Questions 1, 2, 3 and 6.</p>	

Respect for national ownership and the development of institutional relationships based on a partnership model are often mentioned as comparative advantages of the UNFPA approach and ways of working, and are factors behind its legitimacy and institutional positioning as a key census player.

However, case studies and aggregate survey results point at two downsides when this demand-driven approach is taken to an extreme. That is, when country offices merely respond to the demands of NSOs and other national stakeholders: 1) the UNFPA advisory role is undermined, given that purely demand-driven approaches tend to undermine proactive, innovative and positively disruptive advice from UNFPA; and 2) UNFPA support tends to focus on short-term, ad hoc responses rather than on mid- to long-term plans and strategies on, for example, capacity development. As a result, annual work plans (especially those linked to **capacity for data use**) respond to one-off demands without linking to milestones and targets within a broader long-term strategy.

NSOs tend to have a supply-driven rather than a use-driven vision of data. UNFPA is not yet playing a systematic role in shifting this culture towards a use-driven vision by proactively sharing disruptive and unconventional advice. The absence of systematic needs assessments of national stakeholders (especially regarding the capacity to analyse and use data for advocacy and policymaking) hinders the establishment of long-term capacity development strategies and is, ultimately, counterproductive to the efficiency and effectiveness of UNFPA support to strengthening national capacities.

CONCLUSION 9	The sociopolitical implications of censuses
<p>Population censuses are statistical operations that are technical in nature. They also carry significant sociopolitical implications, particularly in countries with diverse political, ethnic and religious make-ups and in countries with histories of conflict and fragility. However, there is no UNFPA-wide guidance on how to address these dimensions or to ensure the reliability, credibility and legitimacy of results. In the absence of such guidelines, country offices tend to approach these issues in different ways, which may not always promote human rights most effectively or appropriately.</p>	
<p><b>Origin:</b> Evaluation Question 7</p>	

A census is a large and highly technical statistical operation involving the entire population of a country. At times, however, census implementation requires mobilizing a government administration to provide operational and logistical support and/or to ensure security, contributing to the sense that the census is primarily an administrative operation.

A census is also an operation with social and political implications, as it may have an impact on aspects related to ethnicity, equity, diversity and religion. This raises certain challenges around the participation of the population and the reliability and confidence of the census results.

The inclusion of ethnicity in census questionnaires may produce different connotations in different contexts. In Myanmar, the inclusion of ethnicity stirred up issues of ethnic conflict and political participation, whereas in Peru — and in Latin America in general — questions on ethnicity relate to social inclusion. In the former, the inclusion of the question posed risks, whereas in the latter, non-inclusion posed a challenge.

There are particular challenges around the issue of ethnicity. According to the United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, ethnicity is a non-core topic that should be understood as a potentially sensitive question and treated with care, particularly as governments and civil society — the main partners of UNFPA — tend to view ethnicity as a crucial topic. However, there is no corporate guidance at UNFPA on how to address ethnicity or other sensitive questions, including on when and how to organize civil society consultations or conduct political risk assessments, which are particularly important in post-conflict environments.

CONCLUSION 10	Links between the census, national surveys and other data for development
<p>Population censuses are invaluable tools for monitoring progress in development indicators such as the Millennium Development Goals and the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals. Census data not only provides the baseline for most indicators, such as the population size of specific groups, but also generates information for indicators on gender equality, education, health and access to natural resources. However, there is limited evidence that UNFPA has prompted partner governments to explore the full potential of combining census data with specific surveys or other sources of data. New data sources offer potential in this area.</p>	
<p><b>Origin:</b> Evaluation Questions 1 and 3</p>	

Population and housing censuses not only provide the size of the entire population and of specific population groups, but also supply direct information on the living conditions of the population, individually and collectively (within households). This information helps monitor progress on development indicators, such as the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. Census data not only provides the size of population groups to serve as denominators for various ratios, but also direct information (‘numerators’) on the status of education, health, employment and access to resources for particular groups and individuals. This, in turn, sheds light on multidimensional poverty measures and the level of gender (in)equality in a given context. In addition, the census generates disaggregated data at the local level, allowing inequality across a country and among regions to be identified. In combination with others surveys (on health or household budgets, for example), census results can be used to map poverty or sexual and reproductive health needs at a low geographical level.

During the 2010 census round, UNFPA support to national stakeholders on data collection remained quite siloed, with support to census and support to surveys often delivered separately. The analytical possibilities of the census, alone or in combination with other sources (including administrative sources of data), were not fully explored.

New sources of data, such as ‘big data,’ are seen as promising, potentially offering the ability to update census information during intercensal periods and/or further investigate crucial global challenges such as migration, health and poverty. However, the possibilities of using big data as an element of UNFPA support to partner governments require additional exploration.

## 4.2. Ex-post Theory of Change

A first visual approximation of the theory of change of UNFPA support to census was drawn up during the inception phase of the evaluation. This was a reconstruction of how the desired changes sought by UNFPA support to the 2010 census round were expected to happen and the links between UNFPA interventions and these changes. The reconstruction reflected the four UNFPA results frameworks covered during the evaluation period (2005 to 2014): The UNFPA Multi-year Funding Framework 2004-2007; the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2008-2011, the Mid-term Review of the Strategic Plan 2012-2013 and the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

Figure 19 shows a version of the theory of change presented in Chapter 2 with revisions based on the evaluation findings.<sup>179</sup> The figure reveals **two intervention strategies**, one to support national

capacity for the **production and availability** of data (strategy number I in blue in the figure) and one to support national capacity for the **use of data** (strategy number II in blue in the figure). The production part of strategy has worked out very well, contributing to the expected changes in terms of strengthening national capacity. Conversely, the **strategy for the use** of data has suffered from a series of flaws and external factors that limited the contribution of the UNFPA support to generating the expected changes.

Figures 20 to 23 present summary explanations for outcome sequences that worked well, sequences with bottlenecks, sequences that did not work as foreseen and sequences that could work better. Annex 6 of Volume 2 provides explanations for each outcome sequence as well as a brief description of internal and external factors that altered the sequences planned in the original theory of change.

### Legend

	Sequences of changes that are taking place as planned
	Sequences that are taking place but show some weaknesses
	Areas where evaluation data provides little or no evidence that the planned changes are occurring
	These are <b>additional aspects</b> and include two considerations on relationships that though very relevant, are not yet reflected in the theory of change.
The size of the circles suggests the importance of the planned changes, as inferred from the results frameworks.	

<sup>179</sup> The figure is a zoom-in into the outcomes part of the theory of change developed during the inception phase.

Figure 19. A zoom-in into the outcomes of the *ex-post* theory of change

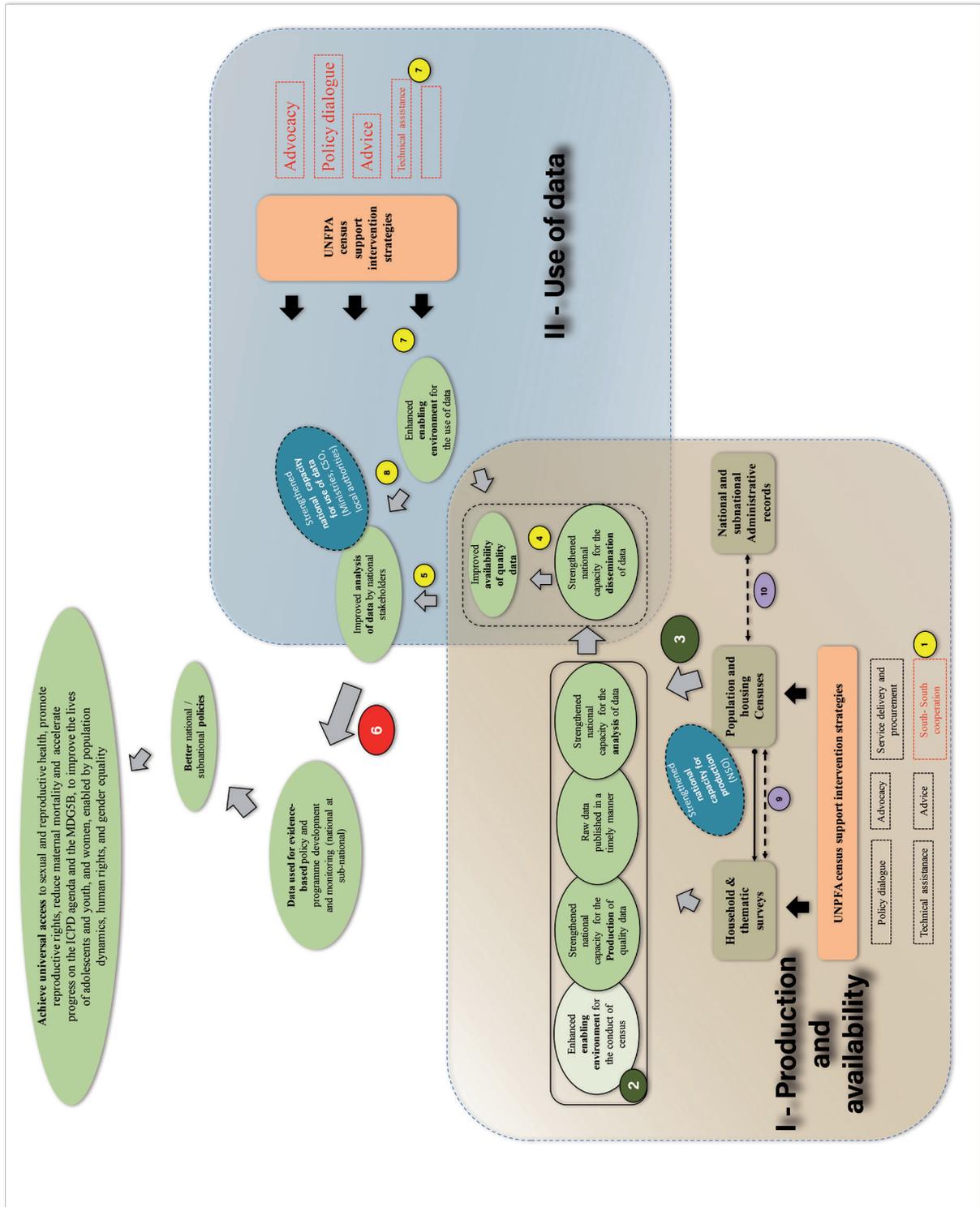


Figure 20. A zoom-in into the data production and availability strategy

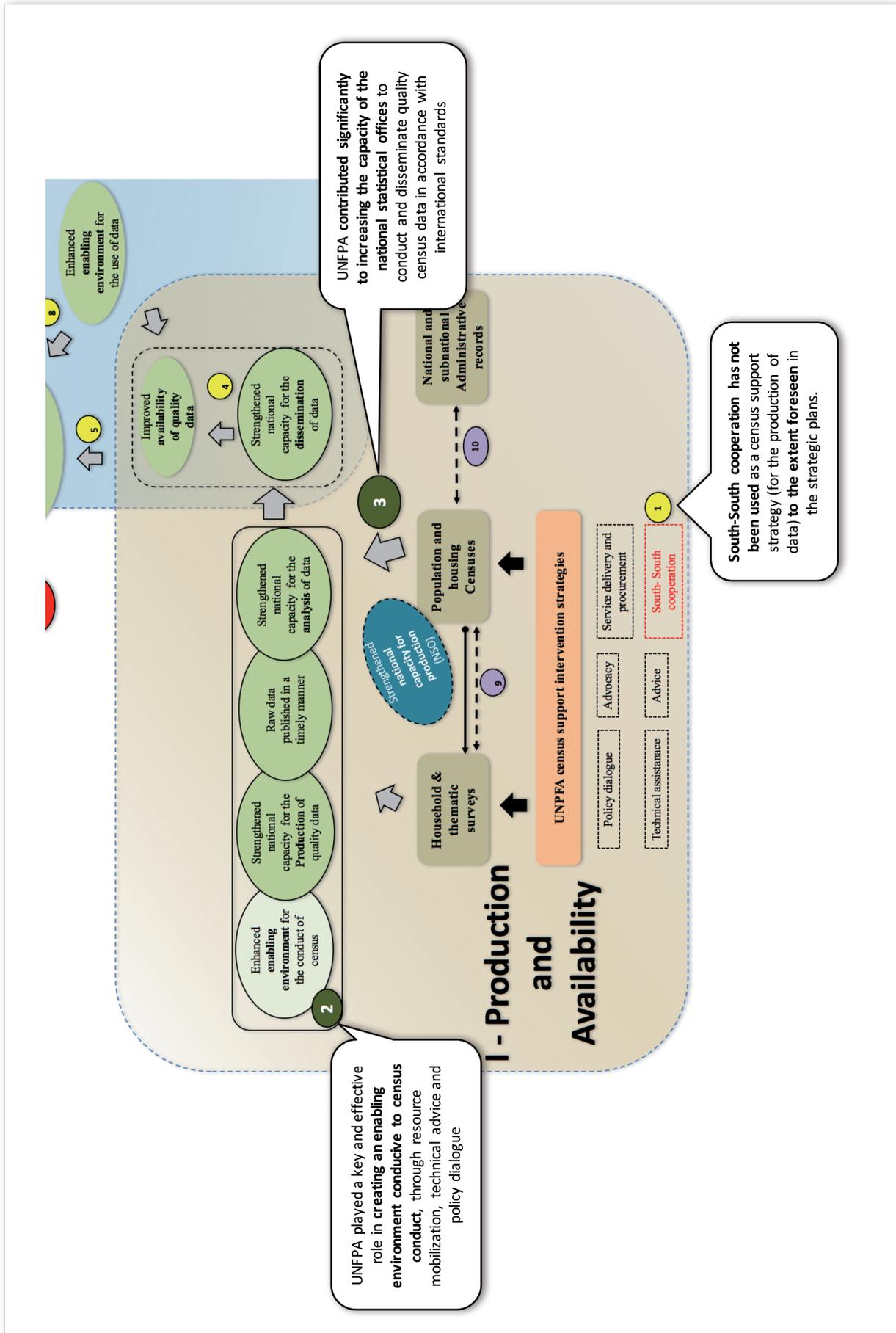


Figure 21. A zoom-in into the data use strategy (Part I)

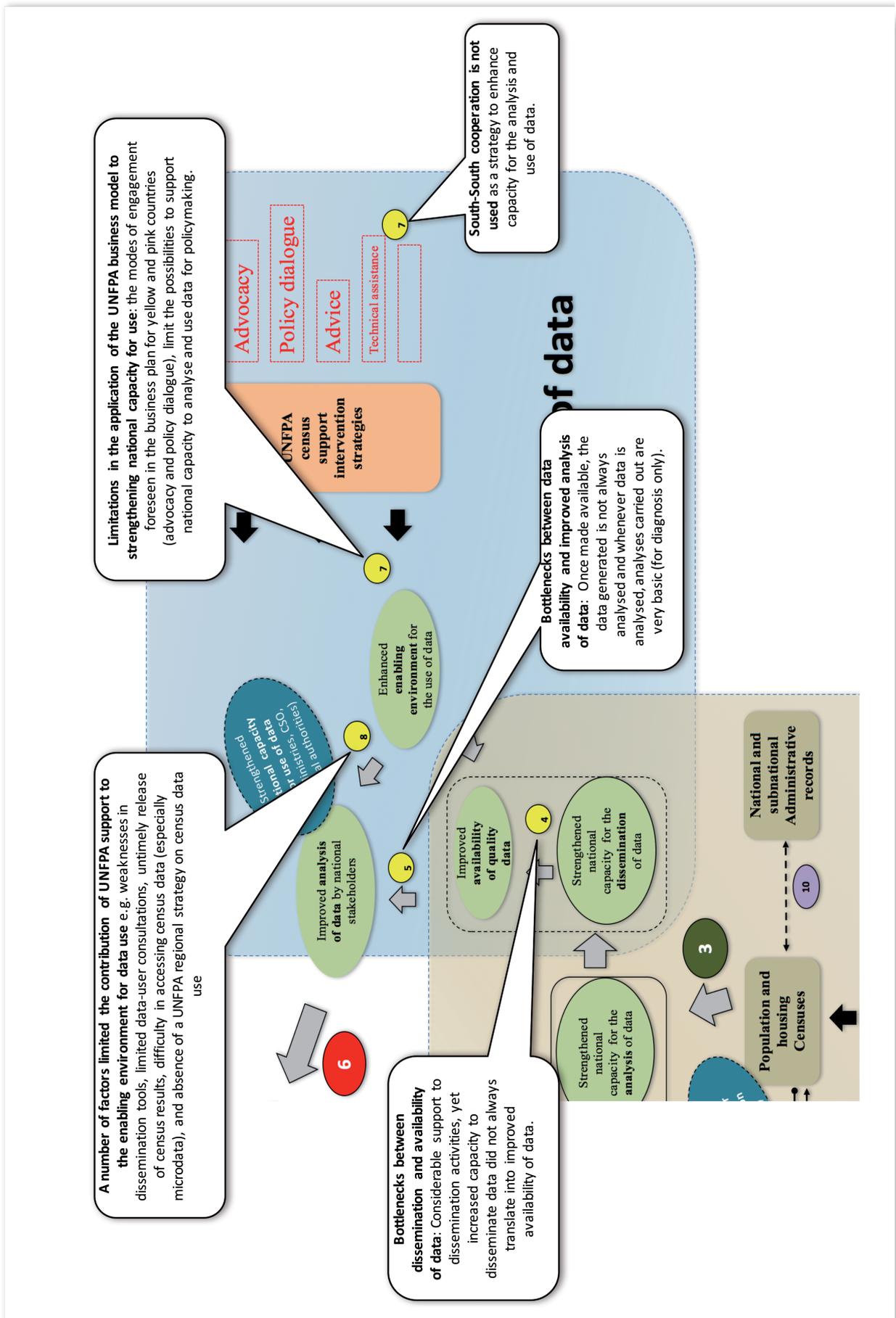


Figure 22. A zoom-in into the data use strategy (Part II)

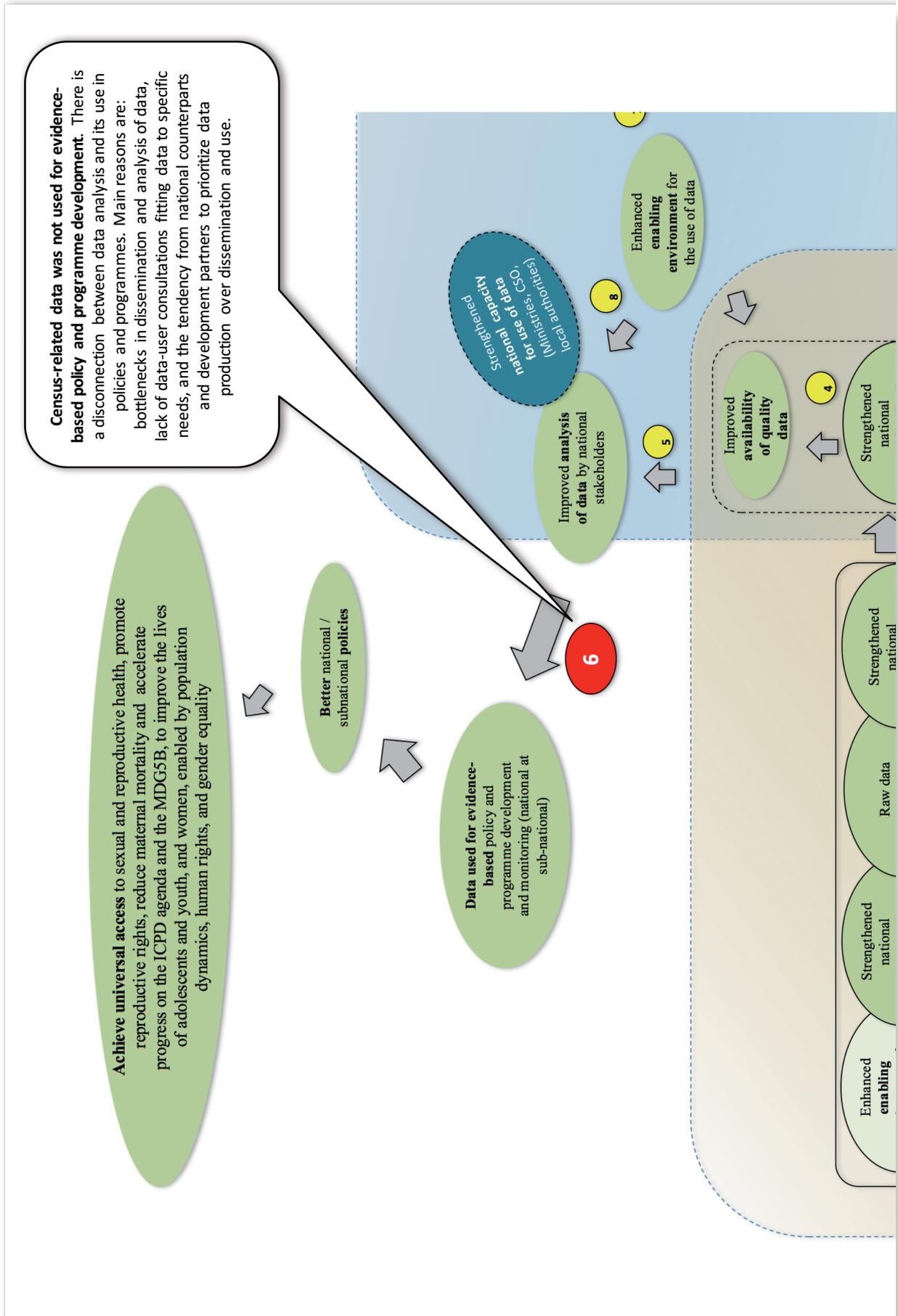
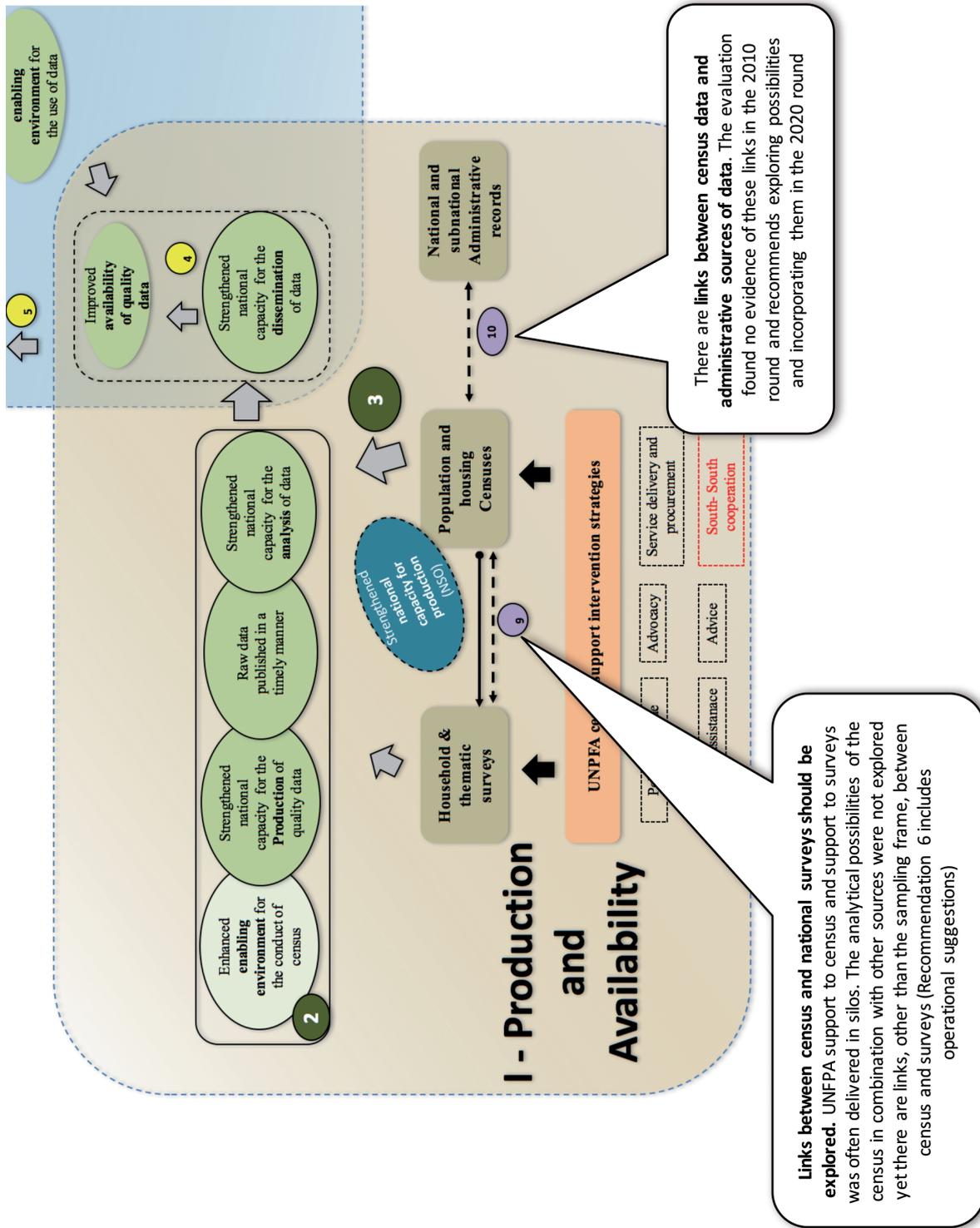


Figure 23. A zoom-in into additional aspects



### 4.3. Recommendations

#### I - Consolidate the position of UNFPA on population and housing censuses

<b>Recommendation I</b>	<b>UNFPA should continue to provide and expand its support to population and housing censuses and draw up a corporate strategy and guidance for the 2020 round.</b>
With the objective of making support to census programmatically visible and better managed, communicated and monitored, UNFPA support to the 2020 census round should be guided by a clear and formalized intervention framework. This framework should be accompanied by formal, comprehensive and structured guidance for regional and country offices, i.e. guidelines on UNFPA support to the 2020 census round.	
<b>Priority:</b> High	
<b>To whom:</b> Population and Development Branch - Technical Division	
<b>Based on conclusions:</b> 1, 2, 3, 6 and 9	

#### Rationale:

As evidenced by this evaluation, UNFPA support to the 2010 round of population and housing census was relevant, cost-effective, of high corporate value for UNFPA and paramount to the overall success of the round. Building on good practices and addressing areas for improvement, UNFPA should continue to support population and housing censuses during the 2020 round within a well-structured strategic framework.

#### Operational suggestions:

As a general principle, census support should be envisioned as a continuous, ongoing and dynamic process encompassing the entire 10-year time frame period between censuses; it should not be approached as a one-off exercise ending with the publication of the data. UNFPA support to census should lead to enhanced capacity for data use in policymaking, advance the ICPD agenda and make progress towards implementing the UNFPA mandate-related Sustainable Development Goals. Strengthening NSO capacity to conduct a census and other surveys is an intermediate objective.

There are three main areas to address: 1) Strategic and programmatic; 2) Guidance and tools; and 3) Capturing good practices.

#### 1. Strategic and programmatic

UNFPA should develop:

- A theory of change for support to census that is clearly linked to the broader strategy for support to population and development data at UNFPA.
- A concise programmatic framework for support to the 2020 census round, with a corresponding results framework and indicators (to monitor progress of the contribution of census support to the implementation of the current UNFPA Strategic Plan). When developing the theory of change and the programmatic framework, UNFPA should envision the census as both a 10-year ongoing process and the backbone of national statistical systems.

#### 2. Guidance and tools

To expand the provision of support to population and housing censuses, UNFPA should develop:

- Specific guidelines — grounded in and reflecting the United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses — on the design and implementation of UNFPA support to the 2020 census round. The guidelines should aim to operationalize the United Nations Principles and Recommendations for UNFPA use, and provide concrete advice on census implementation. At a minimum, the guidelines should call for the following:
  - Systematic data needs assessments. These assessments should identify and map out, through inclusive and participatory consultations, a country's data needs as articulated by key national stakeholders (e.g. NSOs, ministries, CSOs, academia, the private sector and other development partners).
  - Systematic approaches for conducting organizational capacity assessments of NSOs. This will require in-depth, institutional, systematic assessments linked to longer-term plans of support. This should also include an assessment of new technology needs informed by the actual capacity of the NSO to absorb the technology (rather than on *ad hoc* requests of the NSOs).
  - Capacity assessments of national data users. These should systematically assess the strengths, needs and gaps of line ministries, local administrations, CSOs and academia regarding the use of census-related data for the development of policies, programmes and advocacy.
  - Systematic risk assessments. These should include, *inter alia*, a focus on sociopolitical risks, which are particularly relevant in countries with complex political or social contexts (e.g. conflict, ethnic tensions, political transition).
  - The development of protocols or guidance on

conducting censuses in particularly sensitive country settings. These should include recommendations on effective approaches, dos and don'ts and reference resources available at the corporate level.

- The development of guidance on how to create census support design frameworks (e.g. the census project document), with examples and templates.
- The development of guidance on the types of census governance mechanisms required in particular census settings. The rationale for selecting a specific mechanism should be clearly outlined, as should the approach to structuring the mechanism, including when and how to establish it and the stakeholders that should be included. Governance mechanisms include: international technical advisory boards, donor coordination meetings, national advisory committees that include both government and civil society representation, campaigns to inform citizens and donor–government dialogue mechanisms.
- The development of guidance on quality assurance, including on external independent assessments of whether the census operation complied with international recommendations.
- The development of a standard toolkit for managing UNFPA country-level census support. The toolkit should include the minimum human resource requirements needed in country offices to effectively support census, as well as where external expertise can be found and when to access it.
- The toolkit should also feature information on how to access highly specialized expertise on particular aspects of a census (e.g. cartography, data processing) and the type of support available at the regional and headquarters levels (including specific resources and how to access them). The toolkit should also include a troubleshooting section.

### 3. Capturing good practices

- UNFPA should develop a knowledge management and communication plan to ensure that the guidelines and other resources are actively used. This will require the creation and maintenance of a knowledge management platform and the provision of learning and development support for population and development staff.

Recommendation 2	Address the current attrition of census expertise.
UNFPA should adapt current human resource and technical assistance strategies to address the attrition in census expertise and ensure adequate support to the 2020 census round. Towards this end, UNFPA should consider conducting a mapping exercise of in-house census expertise, forming and utilizing regionally based technical census teams and further capitalizing on census CTAs.	
<b>Priority:</b> High	
<b>To whom:</b> Population and Development Branch - Technical Division	
Division for Human Resources	
<b>Based on conclusions:</b> 3	

#### Rationale:

UNFPA has experienced a loss of census expertise throughout the 2010 round. At present, census expertise is uneven and varies across the organization in terms of staffing, structures and skills. The role of census CTAs is particularly important in census support, especially in red and orange country quadrants. However, retention of Census CTAs is sporadic, with the attendant challenge of sustainably institutionalising their knowledge and expertise. Expertise in census is well-recognized by stakeholders as a key comparative strength of UNFPA. Addressing attrition and managing human resources effectively at all levels of the organization is essential to sustain UNFPA institutional capacity to support census.

#### Operational suggestions:

UNFPA should consider the following:

##### 1. Guidance and tools

- With a view to ensuring that UNFPA capacity to support census will meet the specific requirements of the 2020 census round, conduct an in-house mapping at all levels of the organization (including headquarters, which, as of February 2016, had hired a number of population and development staff) to take stock of all available organizational census and data for development expertise, including census CTAs. The mapping should assess the feasibility of tapping into in-house expertise and, when needed, external networks.
- The mapping would allow assessment of in-house attrition of census expertise. Capturing this within regional offices is particularly important: the current UNFPA business model calls on regional offices to provide high-level technical support to country offices and broker technical expertise,

including census expertise. Ensuring that there are adequate human resources to fulfil this requirement is crucial. Additionally, though census expertise is not expected or necessarily needed in all country offices, regional offices should identify the minimum expertise required within country offices to effectively support the implementation of census. Headquarters should be able to provide expertise when regional-level census expertise is lacking.

- UNFPA should develop corporate guidelines on the minimum qualifications needed by its staff to effectively support census, including how to adapt support to each context. These qualifications should be included in the relevant job description and could be part of the corporate strategy guidance for the 2020 round (discussed in Recommendation 1).
- Based on the mapping and the identified minimum qualifications, conduct a capacity assessment of in-house census expertise and develop a capacity development strategy to address existing gaps.

## 2. Implementation mechanisms

- Redesign the population-development-hub (pop-dev-hub) beyond the current email list to better tap into the internal pool of census knowledge and external expertise. This would help identify potential South-South cooperation opportunities and good practices that could feed into corporate knowledge management functions.
- Develop a pool of CTAs with previous experience supporting census. This would facilitate the continuity of CTA support and would help to better capture their learning and knowledge and integrate it into the organization (a current challenge). This pool should also include international technical experts on census in areas such as cartography, questionnaire design, methodology, field operations, data processing and dissemination. This would enable the current system to use international experts with experience on censuses — even if they are not in living the region.
- Explore and analyse the possibility of reconstituting, at least partially, the Country Technical Services Teams at the regional level. A simplified version could be developed, with a team of census technical experts operating regionally or even intra-regionally. Experts should be employed to support the dissemination, analysis and use of census-related data for policy development, not just the technical aspects of conducting the census.

<b>Recommendation 3</b>	<b>Activate knowledge management for support to census.</b>
The corporate-level knowledge management function should be proactively activated in ways that benefit the transfer and use of the currently underutilized knowledge and experience on census support generated by the 2010 census round.	
<b>Priority:</b> Medium	
<b>To whom:</b> Strategic Information and Knowledge Management Branch Regional Offices	
<b>Based on conclusions:</b> 2, 3 and 5	

### Rationale:

Effective corporate knowledge management offers strong prospects for enhancing UNFPA support to census. Evaluation findings reveal that one of the comparative advantages of UNFPA is that the geographic scope of its work is global and has generated a wide range of country and regional level experiences and knowledge. However, this wealth of knowledge was seriously underutilized during the 2010 census round, with ample evidence that country and regional offices underutilized the guides and manuals produced for internal use (several by the SIC).

### Operational suggestions:

- Regional offices, in collaboration with the Strategic Information and Knowledge Management Branch, should conduct a mapping exercise to identify and systematize census support experiences that could contribute to an organizational knowledge base on census. This would allow UNFPA to more effectively capitalize on the underlying knowledge base generated from UNFPA involvement in census in many countries.
  - The regional offices should use the mapping exercise to carry out a comparative analysis for two purposes: 1) to generate possible opportunities for South-South cooperation by identifying potential providers and recipients (see Recommendation 8); and 2) to identify where UNFPA could play a larger role in ensuring comparability of census data within regions. For example, in regions where migration is an issue (e.g. in South-East Asia, West Africa) UNFPA could advocate for the inclusion of migration in the census questionnaires in a methodologically comparable way, enabling regional-level data analysis and use.
- Identify good practices on census, including on the use of census and survey data in policymaking and systematically include them within the good practices database currently being developed by the Strategic Information and Knowledge Management Branch.

## II - Exploit the full potential of census data

Recommendation 4	Incorporate data use as a focus of UNFPA census support.
<p>UNFPA should decide whether its support to the 2020 census round will focus primarily on the production and availability of data — continuing current practice — or include an emphasis on data use for policymaking, as well. If the latter, UNFPA should ensure that the actual implementation strategy is consistent with the theory of change, allowing for adaptations of the UNFPA business model so that the modes of engagement can adequately adjust to the wide variety of country contexts, variations with countries, and the range of UNFPA support settings.</p>	
<p><b>Priority:</b> High</p>	
<p><b>To whom:</b> Executive Director for the decision</p> <p>Population and Development Branch – Technical Division for implementation</p>	
<p><b>Based on conclusions:</b> 4, 5 and 7</p>	

### Rationale:

While UNFPA support to the production and availability of census data during the 2010 census round was strong, support to the use of data for policymaking was modest and did not follow a long-term strategy. Not supporting the use of census-related data in evidence-based policymaking undermines the ability to support the production and availability of census-related data in order to contribute to achieving Strategic Plan outcomes.

To achieve the goals and outcomes of the Strategic Plan, it is essential that UNFPA support to census contributes to strengthening national capacity for data use. This requires maintaining the current support to the production and availability of census-related data while increasing efforts to improve dissemination and capacity for use. However, in the face of reduced core resources, UNFPA will need to mobilize additional external funding and broaden the donor base (see Recommendation 7) in order to scale up support for use while maintaining support for the production and availability of census data. The suggestions below take this into account.

### Operational suggestions:

To shift the focus from production and availability to dissemination and use of census-related data at the country level, UNFPA should consider the following recommendations in the areas of 1) planning and

programming, 2) implementation strategies and 3) modes of engagement.

## 1. Planning and programming

- Expand the definition of a census project to include support for the effective use of census results. Activities to support an enabling environment for the use of data should be undertaken throughout the census process, including during the intercensal period. Activities could include capacity development for government staff on using data for policymaking and for CSOs on using data for advocacy.
- Include activities related to analysis and data use for policymaking from the onset — even prior to the development of the census project document. Activities should begin as early as the initial policy dialogues between UNFPA and the government (e.g. the NSO) that occur during the census preparatory phase.
- Clearly state in all census project documents or any other alternative census support design that the census support time frame does not end with the publication of thematic reports. Support to data use should be included at the onset of census support and continue throughout:
  - The connection between data and policies should be embedded in census project design from the outset and be covered by the census work plan and the budget.
  - Planned activities should include user–producer consultations, which should occur throughout the process. Consultations should not only address the content of the census questionnaire but also the data needs (the dissemination products and services) of census data users.
  - Planned activities in census project documents should also explicitly include support to developing the capacity of data users to analyse and effectively use data for policymaking or advocacy.

## 2. Implementation strategies

- Develop the capacity of NSOs to identify potential uses for the data they produce, particularly for ministries, local governments and CSOs. This implies a change in NSO mindsets from data producer to provider of statistical information, requiring the ability to listen to and understand the needs and topics of interest of data users.
- Advocate that governments systematically include policy impact assessments in any project of law to be discussed by their legislatures.<sup>180</sup> This will lead to systematic evidence-based policymaking.
- Expand work with CSOs and academia to promote the use of data within programme countries by, for example, encouraging NSOs to allow access to anonymous (to ensure confidentiality) microdata

180 See, for example: “A Review of Impact Assessment Systems in selected OECD countries and the European Commission”: <http://www.oecd.org/gov/regulatory-policy/Sustainability%20in%20impact%20assessment%20SG-SD%282011%296-FINAL.pdf>.

by researchers. This type of advocacy often requires a level of technical expertise unavailable within country offices; the role of regional offices (regional population and census advisers) is therefore crucial. Suggested strategies to engage with civil society and academia include:

- Using soft-aid and policy dialogue, UNFPA should promote, mediate and facilitate (as a convener) dialogue between CSOs and governments on topics covered by the UNFPA mandate (e.g. adolescent pregnancy, the demographic dividend). UNFPA could contribute to these dialogues by ensuring that arguments are empirically grounded in census-related data. Dialogue could be kicked off in workshops discussing the findings of census thematic reports. This would be in line with the call for the ICPD Beyond 2014 report for stronger links between NSOs, academic researchers and ministries and improved partnerships between university researchers and government leaders.<sup>181</sup>
- Establish partnerships with academia, including research universities, to analyse specific topics related to the UNFPA mandate using census and survey data.
- Organize advocacy competitions, whereby, given a topic established by UNFPA, civil society and/or academia are invited to present an advocacy action or strategy based on census-related data. This type of activity could also serve to assess capacity gaps.
- Expand the focus on data use to local administrations, supporting the creation of local-level demand for data. This could be done by supporting linkages among academia, CSOs and local administrations through funding calls for proposals or competitions (e.g. quizzes). Academia and civil society should be encouraged to work together with local administrations to propose solutions to local challenges by analysing and using census-related data. UNFPA should guide this process.

### 3. Modes of engagement

- Permit flexibility in the modes of engagement to best address local needs, particularly in countries that fall under the yellow and pink quadrants. Capacity development is a well-suited mode of engagement to enhance national stakeholder ability for the use of census-related data. Capacity development (e.g. funding training courses or technical assistance) is often a necessary precondition for UNFPA to engage in advocacy and policy dialogue (the preferred mode of engagement for pink and yellow countries).
- Strengthening the capacity for using census-related data in policymaking does not necessarily imply that UNFPA has to provide capacity development directly. It could make use of its comparative

advantage in programme countries as a convener in population data related areas (including census), using partnerships to bring various stakeholders together within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals. In practical terms, this could imply linking donors with an interest in data use with academia and CSOs, connecting academia with civil society within a country or establishing partnerships to foster use.

181 See paragraph 655 of the Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014. Report of the Secretary-General. February 2014.

<b>Recommendation 5</b>	<b>View dissemination as the link between data availability and data use for policymaking.</b>
UNFPA should work with NSOs in innovative ways to ensure that census-related data is disseminated in a manner that fosters data use in policymaking and advocacy. Towards this end, UNFPA should challenge current NSO assumptions on dissemination mechanisms.	
<b>Priority:</b> Medium	
<b>To whom:</b> Population and Development Branch – Technical Division	
<b>Based on conclusions:</b> 4, 5 and 8	

#### Rationale:

The way in which census data is disseminated appears to be one of the factors explaining low levels of use. The evaluation found there to be little innovation on dissemination mechanisms, with current mechanisms habitually featuring traditional thematic reports and pre-defined tables; the needs and requirements of data users were not systematically assessed and dissemination tools did not, as a result, reflect these. Additionally, the usefulness of the dissemination tools is, for the most part, not evaluated. UNFPA tends not to question these dissemination tools, despite the fact that UNFPA could provide useful advice and advocate for innovative tools that respond to data user needs. Though user–producer consultations (covering census products and services) occurred in some countries studied, they did not occur systematically and, when they were held, were often conducted too infrequently (consultations should happen on a regular basis) or began too late into the census process to have a genuine impact.

#### Operational suggestions:

Suggestions on how to foster and improve the dissemination of census data:

- UNFPA should advocate for, promote and facilitate the increased frequency and quality of the content of user–producer workshops and consultations on census data dissemination. The sequence and intensity of these workshops should reflect the level of statistical literacy in the country and be part of UNFPA-supported capacity development actions to enhance national capacity for the use of census-related data.
- Similarly, when promoting the use of anonymized microdata, UNFPA could play a crucial bridging role. UNFPA could work with NSOs to raise awareness on feasible alternatives for publishing anonymized microdata, and then support microdata use by researchers, civil society and universities. UNFPA could help address concerns related to the release

of microdata (e.g. confidentiality) by sharing good practices culled from the array of organizational experience. UNFPA could also highlight the various considerations within different contexts when deciding to release microdata.

- UNFPA country office staff should support NSOs to find new ways of presenting data to foster use. For example, UNFPA could support:
  - The adoption of available technologies to support dissemination (e.g. dissemination based on geographic information systems).
  - Combining census data with geo-localized information on equipment (for example health centres or schools) in geographic information systems in order to allow analysis on the average distance of the population to equipment (such as a health centre) or the size of the population within a certain radius of equipment;
  - A variety of dissemination tools, such as online access to the census database, user-defined tabulations, mapping facilities or CDs that include a dissemination application and corresponding data (particularly useful in countries with slow Internet speeds);
  - Services adapted to categories of users (e.g. cross-tabulation of census information upon request for academic or skilled users);
  - Innovative visualization techniques to present statistical information in a more user-friendly format; and
  - Linking census data dissemination with other surveys, such as the Demographic Health Survey or household surveys, to support access to information that is theme-oriented rather than source-oriented.
- If thematic reports are published from the census, these reports could use census data to illuminate inequalities or gaps in access to resources within a country or region. This would support evidence-based policymaking and the allocation of public expenditure based on empirical assessment.

<b>Recommendation 6</b>	<b>Explore the potential uses of combining census data with other sources, including surveys, administrative sources and other sources of data for development in order to foster full use of census data in the framework of national statistical systems. .</b>
UNFPA should promote the role of the population and housing census as the backbone of national statistical systems, above and beyond a one-off data collection exercise. UNFPA should support programme country efforts to explore the possibilities and to exploit the full potential of combining census data with data from other sources.	
<b>Priority:</b> Medium	
<b>To whom:</b> Population and Development Branch – Technical Division  Data for Development Project unit	
<b>Based on conclusions:</b> 5 and 10	

**Rationale:**

Population census data goes beyond simply providing population figures. As mentioned in Recommendation 1, census should be seen as an ongoing, dynamic process and the backbone of the national statistical system. This approach recognizes and supports the use of data as a key aspect of census support. To fully exploit its use, census data should be linked to other sources of data within national statistical systems and beyond (e.g. large structured and unstructured datasets generated beyond surveys).

**Operational suggestions:**

- UNFPA should intensify its recognized convening role in the context of support to census and expand it by more actively participating in country forums and mechanisms set up to strengthen overall national statistical capacity. In these forums, UNFPA should advocate for census to be seen as the backbone of the statistical system. UNFPA should also promote using census data together with data from other sources in order to advance data use in policymaking.
- UNFPA should support programme country efforts to explore the full possibilities of combining census data with data from other surveys and administrative sources. This will increase the usefulness of census data as an input to decision-making by expanding the scope of questions that the data can address.
- UNFPA should support programme country efforts

to develop and disseminate small-area estimation methodologies to combine census and household survey data to analyse, for example, gender and sexual and reproductive health at the local level. Methodologies similar to poverty mapping techniques (using correlations observed in surveys between variables of interest with variables also collected in a census) can enlarge the scope of local-level analysis.

- UNFPA should collaborate with Programme Countries to explore the potential of big data in combination with census data to develop analysis on topics related to its mandate (such as family planning, child marriage, and the demographic dividend). Big data sources, such as mobile phone data, web search data and social networks can provide valuable information on, *inter alia*, internal or cross-border migration, sexual health, behaviour of adolescents, youth, gender and human rights. Big data often, however, needs to be combined with statistical data (from census or surveys) to increase its comprehensiveness and improve its use in deriving ratios or indicators. For example, adolescent attitudes towards safe sexual behaviour — generated from social network data — allows for an analysis of sexual and reproductive health needs when applied to the size and localization of adolescent groups captured by the census.

### III – Explore new funding mechanisms and tap into the full potential of South-South cooperation

<b>Recommendation 7</b>	<b>Examine new funding mechanisms to support the dissemination and use of data for development, including census-related data.</b>
<p>Explore the feasibility of and possibilities offered by a global-level trust fund dedicated exclusively to <b>supporting the dissemination and use of data</b>, including census-related data in the 2020 census round. The trust fund could address some of the challenges raised in this report, including 1) the limited levels of support to the dissemination and use of census-related data 2) the narrow conception of census (i.e. census seen as a one-off exercise) and 3) the low value for money of census-related investments in terms of enhanced national capacity for the use of data.</p>	
<b>Priority:</b> High	
<b>To whom:</b> Population and Development Branch – Technical Division	
Resource Mobilization Branch	
<b>Based on conclusions:</b> 4, 5, 6 and 7	

#### Rationale:

The ICPD Beyond 2014 report acknowledged that the integration of population data into development planning had not been achieved over the last two decades.<sup>182</sup> Data use is important not only at the national level (where use is currently limited), but also at the global level, to monitor, for example, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

A global-level trust would support the use of census data - as well as data generated through other sources. Indeed, although census-related data is an important source of information for development within national data ecosystems, it is not the only one.

A global trust fund would be appropriate because it would recognize and reflect census-related data as a public good that can be used by national stakeholders and development partners at the national, regional and global levels.

Presently, mechanisms to fund census focus primarily on funding the production of census data. The proportion of funds allocated to support the dissemination and use of census data is comparatively much lower. To address this gap, current resource mobilization

efforts (primarily undertaken at the country level by UNFPA country offices and governments) should be complemented with additional resources targeted specifically at the dissemination and use of data. A global trust fund would be well-positioned to do this, catalysing dedicated funding for dissemination and use.

#### Operational suggestions:

- Examine the possibilities offered by a trust fund operated at the global level to support the country-level dissemination and use of data, including census data for the 2020 census round. UNFPA should use its recognized convening role to lead the process and bring relevant actors into the discussion within the framework of Agenda 2030, which underscores the need for data.

Suggestions concerning support to the dissemination and use of census data within the trust fund:

- The census part of the trust fund should focus on supporting the dissemination and use of census-related data for evidence-based policymaking and programme development. Activities eligible for funding could include capacity development for data analysis and use in policymaking, mobilization of international high-level expertise for knowledge transfer and exchange of experiences on dissemination and use of census-related data.
- Furthermore, the trust fund could foster the implementation of innovative technology for better dissemination and use of data by providing resources for such initiatives. These could include, *inter alia*, online cross-tabulation tools to combine data and metadata, geographic information systems to map the spatial distribution of the population in relation to services such as schools or health facilities, and disaster mitigation applications.
- Moreover, the criteria for fund allocation for initiatives on the use of census-related data should include the establishment of quality assurance mechanisms, including governance mechanisms, national capacity assessments on data dissemination and use, user-producer consultations from the onset of the census operation and the development of census project documents focusing on the use of census-related data.

<sup>182</sup> See paragraph 655 of the Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014. Report of the Secretary-General. February 2014.

<b>Recommendation 8</b>	<b>Prioritize exploring the full potential of South-South cooperation for census support, in line with the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan.</b>
<p>South-South cooperation should be a key strategy of UNFPA support to the 2020 census round. Expand upon the focus of current successful South-South cooperation exchanges for census to support exchanges on analysis, dissemination and the use of census-related data. In addition to NSOs, include a range of stakeholders (e.g. line ministries, CSOs, academia) in South-South cooperation exchanges on census.</p>	
<b>Priority:</b> Medium	
<b>To whom:</b> Regional Offices	
Global South-South Cooperation project unit	
<b>Based on conclusions:</b> 5	

**Rationale:**

The 2008–2013 and 2014–2017 UNFPA Strategic Plans both stress the relevance and importance of South-South cooperation as an implementation strategy. The 2010 census round features many examples of UNFPA-facilitated exchanges between NSOs. However, the scope of these exchanges was quite limited and the use of South-South cooperation falls short of the vision detailed in UNFPA strategic plans. Moreover, as mentioned in Recommendation 1, South-South cooperation offers a way to address some of the shortcomings in the delivery of technical assistance for census, including by reducing the large amount of international consultants typically used, which will develop and deepen institutional bonds between government counterparts.

**Operational suggestions:**

- Regional offices should undertake a mapping exercise in order to identify those countries that may benefit from South-South cooperation as a mechanism for providing technical assistance for census, following the Egypt-Iraq-UNFPA experience. One approach to consider would be to conduct, in partnership with UNSD, a survey of NSOs receiving support from UNFPA in order to gauge their ability to engage in South-South cooperation for census.<sup>183</sup> Once possibilities are identified, regional offices should advocate for the use of South-South cooperation as a mechanism to deliver technical assistance for census and to assist country offices in implementing it.
- Regional offices should support country office

efforts to explore the use of South-South cooperation in order to strengthen their capacity for data use. Currently, a few South-South cooperation experiences (Egypt-Iraq; and Brazil in Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Haiti) have focused on the provision of technical assistance for the production of census data. However, none have focused on the provision of technical assistance for the dissemination and use of data for policymaking. Yet there were opportunities in the 2010 census round (good practices on use of data in Indonesia and Peru, for example) in which South-South cooperation could have been used to transfer capacity on the use of census-related data.

- Regional offices should support country offices' expansion of South-South cooperation between programme countries to include not only NSOs, but also other key national stakeholders such as line ministries, CSOs and academia. This would be particularly appropriate when exchanging experiences on the use of census-related data for policymaking.
- The Global South-South Cooperation project should salvage tools that worked previously but have since been discontinued (such as the online South-South cooperation platform in the LAC region), and assess the usefulness of expanding them to other regions.

183 In 2007, UNSD developed a similar survey for the 2010 census round..



**UNFPA - Because everyone counts**

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