



**Regional Workshop on the
Monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to Food and Agriculture Sector and
the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020 (WCA 2020)**
Nadi, Fiji 6-10 November 2017

CONCLUSIONS OF THE MEETING

Purpose: The Workshop aimed at discussing the Monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to Food and Agriculture Sector, the Pacific Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Fisheries Statistics (P-SPAFS) and at disseminating among Pacific countries the new guidelines for the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020 (WCA 2020), Volume 1, which cover the period 2016-2025. The meeting intended to increase awareness on 21 SDG indicators under FAO custodianship and to help participants gain a deeper understanding of the new census modalities and main census activities, from data collection to data dissemination, as well as new census themes and items advocated by FAO through this new Programme.

Participants: 38 participants attended the meeting, including 26 representatives from 10 member countries from the Pacific plus representatives from the Pacific Community (SPC), FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAORAP), FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific (FAOSAP), FAO Headquarters (HQ) Rome, WFP and American Samoa. Member countries included Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Niue, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Palau, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. Other invited Pacific countries such as Australia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Tokelau, and Tuvalu, could not attend. The participants were directly involved in the SDGs monitoring, the organization of the Agricultural Census (AC) or related statistical operations in their respective countries.

Ms Rasmiyya Aliyeva the Sub-Regional Statistician delivered the welcoming remarks on behalf of Eriko Hibi, FAO Sub-regional Coordinator for the Pacific. Mr Jairo Castano, Leader, Agricultural Censuses and Surveys, Statistics Division, FAO HQ, made an introduction to the Workshop. Mr Mukesh Srivastava, Regional Statistician, FAORAP delivered his remarks. Mr Uraia Waibuta, Deputy Secretary from the Ministry of Agriculture of Fiji, delivered the opening remarks on behalf of the Minister. The opening session was concluded by screening a Video film on "SDGs and FAO".

The participants welcomed the new WCA 2020 guidelines and highly appreciated the content and timing of the Workshop. The hard copy of the FAO publication on the WCA 2020, a booklet with the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and other relevant materials were distributed to the participants for reference during the meeting. In addition, before the meeting, participants were encouraged to consult the WCA 2020 publication on the FAO website at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4913e.pdf>. USB keys containing the WCA 2020, Volume 1 publication, the draft of the WCA 2020, Volume 2, and several other FAO publications and all presentations of the workshop were distributed on the last day of the meeting.

1. The meeting included 21 technical sessions, covering specific technical aspects of relevant SDG indicators and of the WCA 2020, as well as P-SPAFS and priority regional indicators. Technical sessions comprised both FAO and country presentations, followed by discussions. A total of 35 presentations were delivered and discussed, 27 of which on census issues. The meeting programme is presented in the annex.

2. Palau informed that it had conducted a Census of Population, Housing and Agriculture (CPHA) in 2015. The following countries confirmed or provided updated plans for conducting ACs under the 2020 round: American Samoa (2019), Cook Islands (tentatively 2021/2022), Fiji (2019), Kiribati (no plans for AC; plans

to collect some agriculture related data in the next Population and Housing Census, PHC¹), Niue (2019), Papua New Guinea (under consideration), Palau (CPHA 2020), Samoa (2019), Solomon Islands (agricultural survey 2017), Tonga (2025) and Vanuatu (2020).

3. Some countries' materials related to censuses conducted under the WCA 2010 (country metadata reports, reports on census results, other census products and material) were provided to FAO before and during the meeting. More materials will be provided later to complete the existing gaps in the FAO web census repository. Countries expressed interest in census materials such as questionnaires and reports from other countries available at the FAO web repository.

4. The participants noted the importance of the agricultural census in underpinning the statistical system which monitors the SDGs, and providing both the sampling frame for the agricultural survey programme, and a benchmark for the national agricultural statistics system.

5. The participants acknowledged the importance of census data collection of all 23 recommended essential items to enable national and international comparison; relevant frame items for building up the necessary frames for follow up regular agricultural and other surveys; and relevant additional items to meet the information and statistical needs of various national stakeholders. They noted that the census content should be decided by countries taking into account countries' information needs and priorities, based on consultation with data users and relevant producers of official statistics, as well as the need to enable international comparisons.

6. Most participants highlighted a range of existing difficulties related to timely and adequate financing of census operations and also recognised the importance in maximizing the use and dissemination of census data. They agreed on the need to build partnerships and make a business case for the census to persuade decision makers to support and fund the census. Methodological considerations for the census design, taking into account the needs for improving the cost-efficiency of the census were discussed.

7. The participants agreed on the importance of good coordination between national institutions responsible for the agricultural sector (and, in a number of countries, for carrying out of agricultural censuses), such as the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the National Statistical Office (NSO), as well as other concerned government agencies and local public administrations.

8. The benefits of synchronizing the PHCs and ACs were widely and repetitively discussed. Census fieldwork activities are particularly costly in the Pacific due to highly scattered holdings and difficult access to islands and atolls. The inclusions of agricultural items in the PHC to establish a frame and agricultural modules when resources for the AC were not available were in particular discussed. The importance of appropriate training of census staff and of the pilot census to ensure the quality data collection of agricultural items in the PHC was also highlighted. Concern was expressed on the use of obsolete frames for the AC and agricultural surveys. Recommendations were made for better synchronization of the PHC and the AC and relisting of holdings to update the frame.

9. Extensive discussions took place on other specific issues, such as:

- the scope of the agricultural census and the issues related to the inclusion of aquaculture, forestry and fisheries activities in the agricultural census;
- the importance of keeping census questionnaires short and focused on structural/essential items;
- main steps in developing and implementing the census of agriculture, particularly: the conduct of the post-enumeration survey to assess census data quality, archiving and tabulation;
- collecting data on land and crops: total area of holding; areas of crops when mixed crops are grown;
- collection of data on livestock ensuring complete coverage and avoiding double counting, in particular when holders raise animals belonging to someone else under some form of lease agreement. It was clarified that the number of animals disposed of also includes donations of animals for slaughter for festivals and other community events;

¹ Traditionally Kiribati includes some agriculture-related items in the PHC. No AC has been carried out in the country so far.

- anonymization of census microdata and possible FAO assistance ;
- methods for the collection of fisheries data;
- the community survey that collects community-level data and involves a marginal cost, attracted interest of participants as these data complement holding-level data from the agricultural census. The participants also noted the benefits of the complete enumeration in community surveys and their usefulness for census analysis purposes.
- vision for a standardized agricultural census for Pacific countries; the first steps toward harmonization could be explored within forthcoming censuses in 3 countries: Fiji, Niue and Samoa.
- integrated agriculture censuses in Pacific Island Countries (PICs), as well as PHCs needs better engagement of fisheries and forestry.
- moving from what PICs can measure to what should measure: issue with reporting requirements, as well as financial and human resource constraints; support and coordination needed from development partners to be able to monitor SDGs.
- Standard units of measurement: non-standard measures tend to be consistent at local level, tend to be stable over time, and tend to vary across localities; importance of development of conversion tables.

10. It was highlighted, that if aquaculture, forestry and/or fisheries activities are included in the agricultural census, these activities would be partially covered since the agricultural holding is the statistical unit. Thus, in order to have a complete picture of fisheries activities in a country, all holdings engaged in respective activities would need to be included which would be challenging and costly. A separate/specific fisheries census or a sub-sequent specialized survey would be more appropriate.

11. The use of new technologies for field data capture and compilation drew attention and participants noted the advantages and disadvantages. In the region, Tonga and Vanuatu used CAPI in 2016 in their Population Census and “Mini Census”, respectively, while Samoa has applied this method in few household surveys and intends to use it in the Agricultural Census 2019. Fiji used CAPI for its 2017 PHC. Countries agreed that CAPI method was here to stay because of its important advantages, particularly the significant reduction of the time gap between census data collection and the release of census results, cost effectiveness and efficient monitoring of field data collection activities. However, it was emphasized that before adopting this technology for AC, countries should first master the system by pilot testing it in small surveys.

12. Regional guidance document for agriculture statistics and online repository was a recommendation from this meeting.

13. The participants highlighted the importance of the development of new FAO guidelines on operational aspects of census taking (WCA 2020, Volume 2) and welcomed FAO efforts. The electronic version of the current draft of Volume 2 was distributed to participants for their easy reference.

FINAL REMARKS

14. The participants agreed that the Workshop met the objective to help the participants gain a deeper understanding of relevant SDG indicators and the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020 (WCA 2020) for the implementation of their agricultural censuses in the 2016-2025 period.

15. Countries acknowledged the continuous FAO assistance on agricultural censuses in the region and looked forward to receiving further guidance for the preparation and implementation of the ACs within the overall framework of the system of integrated agricultural censuses and surveys. Some countries expressed interest in receiving further technical assistance for archiving and providing safe access to census microdata. Countries were recommended to collaborate closely with national stakeholders, FAO SAP, SPC and development partners in order to include the agricultural censuses as a priority area of country assistance by FAO and the donor community.

16. Countries urged knowledge transfer from SDG custodian agencies to NSOs and relevant sectors. This include a Regional workshop where countries would bring their data sets to build capacity of national statistics officers.

17. Countries agreed to provide within one or two weeks missing census materials and reports to FAO in order to facilitate the documentation of censuses and the dissemination of good country practices.

18. Announcement was made on 27th session of the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS) scheduled in March 2018 in Fiji. APCAS is a platform to inform FAO of needs of member countries. These sessions have been informing FAO agenda on statistics. Participation is open to all FAO member countries.

19. The participants expressed gratitude to FAO and PIFON for the good organization of the Workshop, to SPC for the technical contributions and to each other for sharing their experiences.