



EGYPT: BRAZIL, CABO VERDE, SENEGAL

Strengthening National Capacities in e-Census

Participating partners from Egypt, Brazil, Cabo Verde and Senegal during the 8th African Population Conference. Entebbe, Uganda, November, 2019

The Central Agency for Population Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) is Egypt's National Statistical office (NSO). Facilitated by UNFPA Egypt, CAPMAS has adopted south-south cooperation to share its electronic census experience and join forces with other interested countries' NSOs to support capacity building in this area.

CONTEXT

CAPMAS undertook its first electronic census in 2017. Given that Egypt is one of the most populous countries in Africa and the Middle East, its in-depth technical know-how in censuses has earned it global and regional reputation. Its long history with censuses dates back to 1882 and the 2017 census is the 14th in its admirable record.

In 2018, the UNFPA Egypt Country Office (CO) also facilitated the visit of the Vietnam Government Statistical Office (GSO) to CAPMAS. In 2019, UNFPA Brazil CO approached the Egypt CO to engage CAPMAS in an existing SSC project. The Brazil Reference Centers in Data Collection proposed to expand its reach in Africa where it already has collaboration with Senegal and Cabo Verde.

All the facilitated SSC activities by CO were responses to ad hoc requests by other UNFPA COs that placed Egypt in the provider side in this collaboration. Recently, a formative evaluation of UNFPA's Approach to SSTC was conducted, with Egypt as one of the field-based case studies.

There are challenges to be addressed in this type of SSC, for instance, language, when it comes to exchanges between partner institutions. Also, with ad hoc and demand-driven requests, many times activities are not clearly linked to country program outputs and appropriate budget allocations. CAPMAS responds to all requests whether through UNFPA offices or directly from interested NSOs. As the conduct of census is strongly linked with the political, policy and security dimensions, the timely and efficient execution of planned activities are at times hampered or halted.

PROGRAMME APPROACH

The Reference Centers in Data Collection project was developed and implemented in partnership with Brazilian Cooperation Agency, Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics, and National Statistical Offices from Cabo Verde and Senegal and UNFPA Brazil. The project is a platform for the exchange of experiences, sharing of knowledge and tools and joint development of innovative approaches. Brazil initiated it in 2016 to support the NSOs of Senegal

and Cabo Verde to become Centers of Reference to facilitate the use of electronic data collection in other African countries.

Basically, the Reference Centers provide support to NSOs in the stages of census mapping, technology infrastructure preparation, data collection and societal awareness, with a steering committee to oversee its strategic and technical aspects. The project's three member countries and UNFPA Brazil CO agreed to expand its reach to other Arabic speaking countries through this cooperation with Egypt's CAPMAS.

The project used the opportunity of the 8th African Population Conference, held in Uganda last November to invite CAPMAS as a potential partner to start a new phase of cooperation. With UNFPA support for their participation, CAPMAS presented their e-census process to the three partners at the Conference and shared their operational experience in specific census aspects, particularly in training of enumerators and actual enumeration. This was timely and instrumental in helping Brazil prepare for its next census. A meeting with the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) was also held to explore their engagement in this collaboration.

In principle, the countries agreed then to hold the next steering and technical committees meeting in Cairo in 2020 during which the members will officially formalize Egypt/CAPMAS engagement. Partners also agreed to invite strategic stakeholders such as ambassadors and ministries of international cooperation and foreign affairs, to reposition the census process and ensure government endorsement. Partners agreed to develop a 2020 road map to flesh out the steps, dates, and roles, so that the visit to Cairo and the CAPMAS engagement can be formalized.

Some of the planned actions include the following: continuing the exchanges with partners through the WhatsApp social media platform; sharing of relevant documents such as the UNFPA Technical Brief on the Implications of COVID-19 on Census; and switching to virtual communication to implement the SSC, rather than wait for travel funds allocation to hold an in-person meeting during the global



Partners meeting with the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) for possible SSC engagement. Uganda. November, 2019

pandemic. UNFPA has also proposed to partners some quality assurance aspects to strengthen the SSC intervention, among them the evaluation/ accreditation of the provider products, systematic solicitation of recipients' feedback on the acquired knowledge and the possibility of secondment of technical experts from the provider to support project implementation in the recipient country. Given the enormous possibilities with using an electronic data collection process, partners may also consider expanding the project scope to include surveys, and progress monitoring of relevant policies and programmes.

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