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اللجنة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لغربي آسيا

UNITED NATIONS
Economic and Social Commission
for Western Asia



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Commission Economique et
Sociale pour l'Asie Occidentale

EXPERT GROUP MEETING
ON
“RECORD LINKAGE STUDIES TO ASSESS COMPLETENESS OF DEATH
REGISTRATION”

Beirut, 21-22 December 2017

Information Note

Introduction:

It is widely known that civil registration is the preferred source of data on vital events such as births, deaths, marriages and divorces (UN 2014). However, registration of vital events is often incomplete in many countries, preventing the use of such data for vital statistics.

Evaluating the completeness of death registration traditionally relies on indirect methods, e.g. the Growth Balance Method. This method was developed by Brass in the early 1970s using census and registration data jointly, but is loaded with assumptions of having an accurate census enumeration, no net migration and constant incompleteness rate by age. The results of the indirect methods are usually used for life table construction but not for routine measures of mortality.

Recently, there has been an increased interest in using direct methods such as record matching to assess completeness of registration. This approach pioneered by Fellegi-Sunter (JASA '69) involves linking data from two or more data sets, most commonly linking records from census and registration data for the purpose of assessing completeness and quality of birth or death registration. This method has been recognized in the United Nations Principals and Recommendations on Vital Statistics (revision 3), and can be applied at the national and subnational level. Although studies of registration completeness using record linkages are increasing, there have been very few studies on this topic in the Arab region.

Many countries in the region rely on civil registration data for vital statistics, particularly in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries where the registration system is fairly advanced. However, the statistical system and agencies responsible for registration of vital events in several countries in the region have recently been facing many challenges owing to prolonged political conflicts and population displacement. The quality of such routine data in these contexts is questionable.

ESCWA conducted an Expert Group Meeting on death registration systems and mortality statistics in the Arab region in Beirut, during June 15-16, 2015¹. In addition, ESCWA co-organized a workshop on the record linkage studies to advance data quality assessment of civil registration systems in low and middle-income countries in Washington, during March 31 to April 2, 2016.

In continuation of its previous activities, ESCWA is preparing a pilot study on completeness of death registration based on record linkage including a brief review on record linkage studies of death registration. The pilot study is expected to introduce an estimation of completeness of registration using record linkages of data from censuses and civil registers from some settings in the Arab region. Preliminary findings from the study will be presented and discussed in the expert group meeting in question.

To this end, ESCWA Statistics Division is organizing an EGM on completeness of death registration based on record linkages, to be held at ESCWA premises, UN-House in Beirut – Lebanon during the period 21-22 December 2017.

¹ https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/e_escwa_sd_15_wg-1_report_e.pdf

A. Objectives

The meeting aims to achieve the following goals:

- To discuss demographic methods of evaluating completeness of data from civil registers
- To present and discuss the preliminary findings from the pilot study on completeness of death registration based on record linkage
- To present and discuss evaluation methods of vital statistics used in some member states, including record linkage
- To raise awareness of the use of census micro data in record linkages studies

B. Participants

Relevant international and regional experts, statisticians from national statistics offices, and specialists from related official institutions of some member countries.

C. Documents

- Study on completeness of death registration based on record linkages
- Countries' and experts' presentations

D. Language

The languages of the workshop will be English and Arabic. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided during the meeting.

E. Venue and time of the workshop

The meeting will be held during the period 21-22 December 2017 at ESCWA premises (UN-House) in Beirut – Lebanon.

F. Administrative arrangements

Participants are kindly requested to make their own arrangements to get the visa from the Lebanese embassy in their home country (if needed).

Upon their arrival to Beirut airport, they will need to hire a taxi to reach the hotel.

ESCWA will make the necessary administrative and logistical arrangements.

A list of hotels will be sent to the participants for ease of reference; participants can make their own arrangements for hotel accommodation or can be assisted by the organizers.

Participants are requested to send a scanned copy of their passport and to fill the attached registration forms.

For more information regarding the logistical arrangements, kindly contact: Mrs. Zeina Sinno at the following e-mail: sinnoz@un.org

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