

## **Measuring disability, migration, and marriage registration - recommended questions for inclusion in censuses**

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Pursuant to Agenda 2030's, Sustainable Development Goal Target 17.18 calls for an enhancement of capacity-building support to developing countries to increase the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts by 2020. Similarly, UNFPA's Strategic Plan 2018-2021 (Outcome 4), commits to ensuring that 'everyone, everywhere, is counted, and accounted for, in the pursuit of sustainable development'. Data disaggregation is central to the achievement of sustainable development with respect to identifying those left behind, including vulnerable groups, such as international migrants and persons with disability.

Registration of marriages and divorces is important for development as it facilitates access to rights, especially for women who are often vulnerable. A marriage certificate provides legal proof of marriage, which women can use to secure property and collect an inheritance in the case of widowhood. Marriage registration may help to prevent child marriage through providing a legal framework against child marriage in countries where such laws exist and are effectively enforced. Moreover, marriage registration enables paternity recognition, fair divorce, and other benefits linked to marriage. Couples in unregistered marriages are less likely to have access to benefits such as tax regimes or social protection where such benefits are preferential to married couples. Similarly, divorce registration allows both individuals to remarry after a divorce, and provides a legal basis for the distribution of parental responsibilities at the end of a marriage.

In many countries, censuses are the main source of data for disaggregated analysis in line with SDG target 17.18, and in particular, for data on disability and migration. While censuses, by their nature, do not collect information on a lot of variables, the

number of observations is vast, especially for disaggregation of data and in comparison to household surveys. While a household survey may be large enough to compare the prevalence and outcomes of disability by sex or age, or even by rural and urban residences, it is unable to produce analyses on small sub-populations. It is critical that sub-populations, such as mass migrant populations or comparisons of rural men with rural women, are not overlooked or disaggregated for.

While previous censuses have collected data on migration, disability, age at first marriage, and marriage registration, the main challenge is that the data have not been collected in a standardised and systematic way across countries and also between censuses. Moreover, the questions included in the census questionnaire, as well as the definitions, have tended to vary widely.

The purpose of this brief is to provide guidance on the recommended questions for inclusion in censuses, in an effort to improve the quality and comparability of data on disability and international migration. For marriage and divorce, the brief seeks to encourage the inclusion of questions on (1) age at first marriage, (2) type of marriage, and (3) registration status of the marriage in this 2020 round with hopes for better standardization in future.

### **A. Recommended questions on disability.**

Disability is complex as it incorporates a variety of different components: body functions & structure, limitations in activities (capacity) and restrictions in participation (performance), and characteristics of both the person and their environment. Persons with disability face barriers to participation in life, and are often one of the most disadvantaged population groups.

To address the urgent need for cross-nationally comparable measures of disability the Washington Group (WG), a UN sponsored City Group, was created in 2001. WG questions are now recommended in the UN Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 3.

The Washington Group on Disability Statistics identified six domains of functionality to be included in the census as outlined below (See Annex 1):

1. Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?
2. Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid?
3. Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps?
4. Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?
5. Do you have difficulty (with self-care such as) washing all over or dressing?
6. Using your usual (customary) language, do you have difficulty communication, for example understanding or being understood?

***It is strongly recommended that ALL of the six WG questions be included and asked in exactly the same way as above and in Annex 1.***

The six domains have scaled response categories: 1) no – no difficulty, 2) yes – some difficulty, 3) yes – a lot of difficulty and 4) cannot do at all. A response of difficulty in at least one domain, that is coded as a lot of difficulty or cannot do it at all, would result in an identification of a person with a disability.

For purposes of reporting and generating internationally comparable data, the WG has recommended a specific cutoff to be used to define the population of persons with disability based on responses to the six domains. The sub-population identified as with disability includes those: with difficulty in at least one domain, that is coded as a lot of difficulty or cannot do it at all. A technical analytic guide (SPSS Syntax) is provided on the WG website:

<http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/WG-Document-5A-Analytic-Guidelines-for-the-Washington-Group-Short-Set-SPSS.pdf>

The Washington Group questions have been tested successfully in many countries (low, middle, and high income) & used in censuses or surveys in over 78 countries. The questions are designed to be internationally comparable, and will enable identification of most persons with disability.

To address challenges with translation and language around disability, a translation protocol is provided on the Washington Group website:

<http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/WG-Document-3-Translation-of-the-Washington-Group-Tools.pdf>

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## **B. Recommended questions on international migration**

On 13 July 2018 UN Member States finalized the text for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (Text available in all official languages). The global compact comprises 23 objectives, which can be found in paragraph 16 of the Global Compact for Migration. Objective 1 is to collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated migration data as a basis for evidence-based policies

In line with the Global Compact, UNFPA is committed to improve national data collection by supporting the integration of migration-related topics in national censuses, such as on:

- country of birth,
- country of citizenship,
- year/period of arrival/ most recent arrival date,
- country of birth of parents,
- country of residence five years prior to the census, and
- reason for migrating

The first three are core questions in the U.N. Principles and Recommendations for Population & Housing Censuses, Revision 3. UNFPA also advocates for timely analysis and dissemination of results, disaggregated and tabulated in accordance with international standards, for statistical purposes.

Information about country of birth and citizenship enables the identification of a foreign-born population and foreign citizens, respectively. Questions that seek information about year or period of arrival in the country provide information to distinguish international migrants who have recently arrived, from those who arrived years ago. Such information is important for policy-making, given that recently arrived migrants may require additional government intervention to ease integration.

In addition, other migration-related questions that should be considered in national censuses refer to country of birth of parents, country of residence five years prior to the census, most recent arrival date and reason for migrating.

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### **C. Questions on marriage registration and age at first marriage**

There is virtually no data on marriage registration coverage in most Low- and Middle-Income Countries. For example, a recent review of 160 census questionnaires from the 2010 round of censuses, which have been archived by the UN Statistics Division (UNSD) and/or the IPUMS census archive at the University of Minnesota, found that **only 8 countries collected information on whether or not a marriage was registered**. Such data are crucial for assessing not only the completeness of marriage registration, but also the implications of marriage registration for women's lives, and the lives of their children. Countries with such data in their last census included Armenia (2011), Georgia (2014), Kyrgyzstan (2009), Poland (2011), Sri Lanka (2014), Australia (2011), Egypt (2006) and Senegal (2013)<sup>1</sup>. These countries used varied approaches to collect the information on marriage registration, and a sample of the relevant questions is provided in Annex 3 below.

***This technical brief includes these sample questions to encourage UNFPA staff to consider advocating with NSOs to include such questions in the forthcoming national census, if timing still permits.***

Another notable finding was that **fewer than 30 countries** included a question on **age at first marriage**, despite a recommendation for including this question within the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 3 (paragraph 4.247). UNFPA also advocates for the inclusion of a question on age at first marriage for respondents who were ever married.

An increase in the collection of such data in the census would enable: (1) better understanding of the global, national and sub-national coverage of marriage

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<sup>1</sup> In view of the fact that not all countries have their census questionnaires archived by UNSD and IPUMS, please let us know if you are aware of additional countries that asked such questions on marriage registration in census.

registration; (2) research on the implications of non-registration for women’s lives (and the lives of their children); and (3) assessment of the prevalence and incidence of child marriage, and adherence to country laws on minimum age at marriage. It will also allow the examination of which marriage registration questions were most effective in the different contexts, and provide improved guidance on discrete wording of such questions in the next census round.

To further enhance marriage registration data, TD/PDB formally proposed the following questions to be added to DHS and MICS, to persons who self-identify as “married” on marital status.<sup>2</sup>

What is the type of your marriage?

- Civil/Statutory;
- Customary/Traditional;
- Detailed religious categories, to be defined at the national level, e.g. Islamic/Hindu/Christian;
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Unknown

Has your marriage been legally registered?

The question below on age at first marriage/union is included in the core questionnaires of DHS and MICS: What was your age (completed years) when you got married for the first time?

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<sup>2</sup> The two questions are preliminary and based on desk review. They have not been field tested by the two survey programmes.

## ANNEX 1: WASHINGTON GROUP SET OF QUESTIONS ON DISABILITY

1. Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?

- No - no difficulty
- Yes - some difficulty
- Yes - a lot of difficulty
- Cannot do at all

2. Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid

- No - no difficulty
- Yes - some difficulty
- Yes - a lot of difficulty
- Cannot do at all

3. Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps?

- No - no difficulty
- Yes - some difficulty
- Yes - a lot of difficulty
- Cannot do at all

4. Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?

- No - no difficulty
- Yes - some difficulty
- Yes - a lot of difficulty
- Cannot do at all

5. Do you have difficulty (with self-care such as) washing all over or dressing?

- No - no difficulty
- Yes - some difficulty
- Yes - a lot of difficulty
- Cannot do at all

6. Using your usual (customary) language, do you have difficulty communicating, for example understanding or being understood?

- No - no difficulty
- Yes - some difficulty
- Yes - a lot of difficulty

Cannot do at all

## ANNEX 2: CENSUS QUESTIONS REGARDING TO INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

### COUNTRY OF BIRTH (P&R Core Question)

For countries defining place of birth as the geographic unit in which the birth actually occurred:

Where was (person) born?

- This country, specify province [or state, region] and municipality [or national-relevant second level civil division]
  - o Province: \_\_\_\_\_  province unknown
  - o Municipality: \_\_\_\_\_  municipality unknown
- Another country, specify country according to present borders:
  - o Country: \_\_\_\_\_
- Unknown
- Country of birth unknown

For countries defining place of birth as where the mother of the individual resided at the time of the person's birth:

Where did \_\_\_\_\_'s mother reside when she gave birth to him/her?

- This country: \_\_\_\_\_ specify province [or state, region] and municipality [or national-relevant second level administrative division]
  - o Province: \_\_\_\_\_  province unknown
  - o Municipality: \_\_\_\_\_  municipality unknown
- Another country, specify country according to present borders
  - o Country
  - o Unknown
- Country of birth unknown



**COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP (P&R Core Question)**

What is (person’s) country of citizenship?

- This country: \_\_\_\_ specify province [or state, region] and municipality [or national-relevant second level administrative division]
- (This country) and another country (or other countries), specify according to present borders:
  - o The other country(country) \_\_\_\_\_
- Another country (or countries), specify country according to present borders
  - o Country \_\_\_\_\_
- Country unknown
- Country of citizenship unknown
- No citizenship (Stateless)

**YEAR OR PERIOD OF ARRIVAL IN THE COUNTRY FOR FOREIGN-BORN PERSONS (OR RETURN MIGRANTS) (P&R Core Question)**

For countries where immigrants have the right to free movement in and out of the country after having obtained permanent or legal residence status, ask persons born in another country:

On which year and month did (person) first arrive in (this country) to live for a year or more?

- Year \_\_\_\_  Month \_\_\_\_  Unknown

For countries where people migrate into more than once, whether at different life stages or in a circular way such as for work, ask persons born in another country or return migrants:

On which year and month did (person) last arrive in (this country) to live for a year or more?

- Year \_\_\_\_  Month \_\_\_\_  Unknown

**COUNTRY OF BIRTH OF PARENTS** (P&R Non-Core Question)

Ask of persons who were born in the country

Where was each of (person's) parents born?

(a) (Person's) father

- (This country)
- Another country [Specify name of country according to present borders.]

\_\_\_\_\_

- Country of birth unknown

(b) (Person's) mother

- (This country)
- Another country [Specify name of country according to present borders.]

\_\_\_\_\_

- Country of birth unknown

**MAIN REASON FOR MIGRATION (OR LEAVING THE COUNTRY FOR RETURN MIGRANTS)** (P&R Non-Core Question)

Reason for migration/return is typically addressed to persons who have ever lived abroad for at least 12 months. In some countries the target population for this question are returned migrants, foreign-born persons or foreign citizens.

What was the main reason (NAME) came to live in this country?

- Settlement (long/term/permanent stay)
- Employment (including military service)
- Education or training
- Marriage, family reunification or family formation
- Forced displacement (refugees, asylum seekers, temporary protection, etc.)
- Other reason (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Additional questions, as advocated for by the United Nations Expert Group on International Migration Statistics, refer to the acquisition of citizenship and own or household member's residency abroad.

**ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP (P&R Non-Core Question)**

For citizens of (this country) including dual citizens:  
Have you had the citizenship of (this country) since birth?  
 No  Yes - Skip next 3 questions

How did you obtain the citizenship of (this country)?  
 By marriage  By naturalization   
By option  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

[Note: The above response categories should be adjusted to include those appropriate to the country.]

What was your previous citizenship [Specify according to present borders.]  
Country \_\_\_\_\_  Country unknown

In what year did you acquire the citizenship of this country?  
Year \_\_\_\_\_  Year unknown

**EVER RESIDED ABROAD (P&R Non-Core Question)**

Ask persons over one year old and who are citizens of the country where data are being collected:

Has (person) ever lived outside (this country) for a period of at least 12 months\*?  
 Yes  
 No - Skip next 2 questions  
 Don't know - Skip next 2 questions

When did (person) last arrive to live in (this country) for 12 months or more\*?  
Year \_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_  Don't know

In which country did (person) last live? [Specify country according to present borders.] Country \_\_\_\_\_  Don't know \*

In capturing returned migrants, countries may also choose to use other duration threshold per national practices.

**HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS RESIDING ABROAD (P&R Non-Core Question)**

Ask head of household or reference person:

In the last five years, has any former member of this household left to live abroad for at least 12 months and is still living abroad now?

- Yes - please list them by name and proceed with the next questions for each
- No - end of emigration module

How many have left to live abroad for at least 12 months and are still living abroad now?

For each person identified as emigrant, specify:

Person name, Sex, Age (in completed years) at departure, Year and month of departure, To which country did the person move to live for at least 12 months (specify country according to present borders), What is the person's main reason for leaving the country to live abroad, Educational attainment at departure (for persons 10 and older at departure), Occupation at departure

A pre-coded list of countries may be used if the destination is concentrated in a few countries. In such a case, a category "Other, specify \_\_\_" should be included in the list.

**ANNEX 3: SAMPLE QUESTIONS FROM COUNTRIES THAT INCLUDED QUESTIONS ABOUT REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGES IN THEIR 2010 ROUND OF CENSUS UNDERTAKING**

No	Country	Census Year	Question on Marriage Registration
1	Armenia	2011	<p>The marital status question categorized persons aged 15 years and above into the following marital statuses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Never married</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Married (registered)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Married (not registered)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Marriage carried out only with church canonical ritual</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Widowed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Divorced (registered)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Separated (not registered)</li> </ul>
2	Georgia	2014	<p>The marital status question classified persons aged 15 years and above into the following marital statuses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Married</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Single</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Widowed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Divorced</li> </ul> <p>Persons who reported being married were further asked if the marriage is registered (Y/N)</p>
3	Kyrgyzstan	2009	<p>The marital status question classified persons aged 15 years and above into the following marital statuses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Never married</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Registered married</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Not registered married</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Widowed</li> </ul>

			<input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Separated
<b>4</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>2011</b>	<p>The marital status question categorized persons aged 15 years and above into the following marital statuses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Single</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Married (in actual status of marriage)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Married (in separation adjudicated by court)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Married (not in the actual status of marriage but without separation adjudicated by court)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Widower/widow</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Divorced</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the respondents were asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Specify the date of contracting marriage or establishing cohabitation; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> State if the current relationship is formally established in a registry office or in a church (religious association)? However, this question was not mandatory. Allowable responses were (1. Yes; 2. No; and 3. I don't want to answer this question).</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>Sri Lanka</b>	<b>2011</b>	<p>The marital status question categorized all persons into the following marital statuses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Never married</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Married (Registered)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Married (Customary)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Widowed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Divorced</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Legally separated</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Separated (not legally)</li> </ul>

6	Australia	2011	<p>The marital status question classified all persons into the following marital statuses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Never married</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Widowed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Divorced</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Separated but not divorced</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Married</li> </ul> <p>The questionnaire has an instruction to interviewers / respondents that states that the category "married" refers to registered marriage.</p>
7	Egypt	2006	<p>Marital Status 18 years or more for males 16 years or more for females</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Below Age</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Never Married</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contractually married</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Married</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Divorced</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Widow(er)</li> </ul>
8	Senegal	2013	<p>B41. Etat matrimonial Situez l'état matrimonial du recensé et inscrivez le code correspondant à la réponse (voir instructions en bas de page). Si B41 &gt;= 06, skip B 42</p> <p><i>Options:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 00- Monogame (pour les hommes et les femmes mariés en union monogame)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 01- Poly/1ère épouse (pour les femmes mariées en union polygame et qui occupe le 1er rang (1ère épouse))</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 02- Poly/2ième épouse/2 épouses</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 03- Poly/3ième épouse/3 épouses</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 04- Poly/4ième épouse /4 épouses</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 05- Poly/5ième épouse /5 épouses</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 06- Célibataire</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 07- Veuf/Veuve</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 08- Divorcé(e)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 09- Union libre (concubinage)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 10- Séparé (e)</li> </ul>

			<p>B42. DECLARATION A L'ETAT CIVIL</p> <p>Est-que le mariage de [NOM] a été déclaré à l'Etat civil? Inscrivez la réponse Appropriée: <input type="checkbox"/> 1 si c'est OUI</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 0 si c'est NON</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> et 9 pour NSP</p>
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