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Towards the 2010 Population Census -Implementation of the third pilot survey-

This June, the Statistics Bureau of Japan (SBJ) conducted the third pilot survey (the final pilot survey serving as the full-dress rehearsal) to ensure accurate and smooth implementation of the next Population Census scheduled on October 1, 2010.

Through the two pilot surveys conducted in 2007 and 2008, the SBJ has been examining various issues in the field such as survey items, design of the questionnaires, distribution and collection of questionnaires, and so on.

This time, the SBJ conducted a final examination of the survey methods and so on, based on the results of the first and second pilot surveys. Before the 2005 Population Census, the whole area of Japan was divided into 980,000 enumeration districts (EDs) by the SBJ. In the third pilot survey, 510 EDs were selected out of the above EDs, and the following survey methods were used.

The SBJ introduced a new method for submitting every questionnaire to an enumerator by putting it in sealed envelopes, and submitting the questionnaires to local governments by mail. Households could then select the method of response. An online survey was also adapted in specific areas.

In addition, the SBJ studied how to follow up households that had not yet submitted the questionnaires by the due date, following the first and second pilot surveys.

These days, the SBJ is facing a more difficult survey environment than ever before, due to increasing privacy awareness, households in which members are absent from home, a decrease in the understanding of the survey and less conscious cooperation with the survey. In order to overcome such an environment, the SBJ has been discussing the implementation of other survey methods, reviewing the survey items, and introducing measurements to improve the survey environment, together with local governments, academics and concerned private organizations, and conducted pilot surveys to examine them in the field.

Based on the results of the third pilot survey, the SBJ will draw up an implementation plan for the 2010 Population Census in October. This will facilitate the smooth implementation of the census.

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