

**General Population Census of Cambodia, 2008**  
**Minutes of the Third Census Technical Committee Meeting**  
**On Thursday, 24 August 2006**

**List of Participants**

HE. Chhay Than	Senior Minister, Minister of Planning, Chairman of CTC
HE. Ouk Chay	Secretary of State, Ministry of Planning
HE. In Saroeung	Under-secretary of State, Ministry of Planning
HE. San Sy Than	Director General of NIS
HE. Rong Chhorng	Secretary General, NCPD/ COM
Ms. Bettina Maas	UNFPA Representative, Cambodia and her colleagues
Mr. Nott Rama Rao	UNFPA Census Consultant
Mr. Harry Lode,	UNFPA Data Processing Consultant
Mr. Shibanuma Akira	JICA Expert for NIS and his colleagues
Mr. Ith Sotha	Director of Geographic Department, MLMC
Mr. Duch Sonn	Deputy Director General, Ministry of Interior
Ms. Hang Lina	Deputy Director General of NIS
Mr. Has Bunton	Deputy Director General of NIS
Mr. Mam Marady	Chief of Cabinet, Ministry of Planning
All members of the Census Technical Committee Working Groups.	

**Introduction**

The Third Meeting of the Census Technical Committee was held at NIS at 3 P.M. on the 24<sup>th</sup> Of August 2006. Welcoming the participants the Senior Minister, Minister of Planning and Chairman of CTC, HE. Chhay Than underlined the importance of the meeting and asked HE. San Sy Than, Director General of NIS and Ms. Hang Lina, Deputy Director of NIS to report about the progress of census activities.

**H.E. San Sy Than** reported that the provisional estimate of the census budget was about six million US dollars. He said that we expected to get about three million US dollars from the German Government through the efforts of UNFPA and we had requested JICA to add more on training and field enumeration. After NIS prepares the proposal in which the Royal Government of Cambodia requests the Government of Japan and JICA for 2.4 million \$US for the census implementation As JICA has prepared plans to provide for the second phase of project about \$ 2.4 million the gap was only \$ 600,000. The NIS has requested the Ministry of Economic and Finance for the budget filling the gap (expected to get about 300,000 \$US). However, the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Government of Japan has already approved approximately \$900,000 from out of counterpart funds provided by the Japanese Government for the construction of a new census building.

Reporting on the progress of census preparation, **Mrs. Hang Lina** stated as follows:

- Preliminary mapping of villages using GPS and EA delineation for four provinces; Rotanak Kiri, Mondul Kiri, Kratie, and Stoeung Treng has been completed. This work was continuing in the other four provinces; Krong Preah Sihanouk, Kampong Thum, Posat, and Odar Mean Chey.
- Some questions have been included in the census questionnaires according to the requests from the Ministries and user agencies during the stakeholder's workshop on 8 August 2006. The additional questions related to literacy, mother tongue, and secondary work, place of work and schooling, sector of employment, remittance, disability, and death in household.

- Conducted a second pre-test of draft questionnaires in ten villages: two villages in Kandal, two villages in Kampong Cham, one village in Kampong Speu, one village in Svay Rieng, one village in Stoeung Treng, one village in Preah Vihear, one village in Kampong Thum, and one village in Phnom Penh.
- Field pre-test supervision group consisting of: Mrs. Hang Lina, Mr. Hor Darith, Ms. Bettina Maas, Mr. Nott Rama Rao, Ms. Alice Levisay, Ms. Christine Chan, Mr. Sok Vanna, and Mr. Chap Rathana, supervised the pretest operations in Kampong Speu, Kandal, Svay Rieng, Kampong Cham, Kampong Thum, and Phnom Penh. The results of checking were:
  - o time for interview had increased because of adding new questions,
  - o Mother tongue question was difficult to get correct answer
  - o For place of birth and previous residence some of the respondents did not remember the name of district
  - o Sector of employment: the respondents/interviewers could not identify clearly in which sector employed.
  - o Secondary job: the interviewers were also not clear about the household production/ services
  - o Most of the respondents did not provide answer to the remittance question.

**Mr. Nott Rama Rao** endorsed the points made by Ms. Hang Lina. He further clarified as follows: The census questionnaire mainly follows the UN recommendations. We had accepted some of the requests made by line Ministries. We have already revised some questions before going to the stakeholder's workshop on August 8, 2006. We have added questions based on more suggestions from participants during the stakeholders workshop. The main issues concerning the questionnaire are:

1. Mother tongue. We didn't include this question originally, but due to the request from the Ministry of Education, we included. We hope to receive in the plateau and mountain regions such as Rotanak Kiri, and Modul Kiri information on ethnic and minority mother tongues. Ministry of Education would very much like to utilize this information in education planning for ethnic groups. One major problem is that many of the foreign mother tongue speakers report their mother tongue as Khmer. To solve this problem we have to do more publicity by media and sensitize the village chiefs and solicit their cooperation and assistance in persuading informants to furnish correct information at the census.

- The important points in the census questionnaires were:
  - o Disability: this is a UN recommendation
  - o Secondary job: Initially we thought of collecting this information for the employed persons only. But after discussion, we decided to collect this information for all people like employed, unemployed, homemakers, students, dependents, etc.
  - o Question on locations of workplace (for employed persons) and school for students have also been added.
  - o The difficult question is on remittance received by the household. During the field supervision, we found that out of 100 households only two households had reported having got small amounts of money from relatives. The informants are not generally comfortable with this question. In this situation It is not advisable to retain this question. It can affect the general response to the questionnaire at the census.
  - o Death in household is an important question for Cambodia.
  - o We also added questions on assets owned by households such as radio, television, telephone, car, bicycle, motorcycle, tractor, and hand tractor.
  - o Sources of drinking water have been given revised codes as recommended by WB water specialists.

So far, the present census questionnaire is generally in conformity with international standards. Taking into account the level of enumerators the census questionnaire has been made simple, but comprehensive to cover many topics of importance to Cambodia in its march towards progress. Manuals of instructions to enumerators and supervisors have been prepared explaining the concepts and definitions. To get good results we have to organize intense training for NIS staff who would be trainers of field staff and also trainers of trainers. The training should include both theoretical and practical. Training guides would also be prepared in due course.

It is very necessary to carefully organize the census publicity campaign or census information and education campaign to get full cooperation from the public. In the matter of preparing accurate geographic data base for the census NIS should work in close collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and the Geographic department. This would ensure uniformity of list of villages and other administrative units available with each of these departments.

**Mr. Harry Lode** reported that he had arrived only the previous day and was therefore not yet ready with the data processing plan. However he could present certain general issues based on his preliminary study of the situation. Regarding software packages for the processing of 2008 census questionnaires, there were two alternative approaches: -

- 1). To follow the same procedure as during CIPS 2004, in other words to use CSPRO for data entry and verification only and to use the existing IMPS modules for computer editing and tabulation.
- 2). To use CSPRO for all tasks, noting that with the arrival of version 3.1 the tabulation module is now fully implemented.

CSPRO as proposed in (2) above is a state-of-the-art, Windows based package that incorporates even more functionality than IMPS. NIS staff of data processing division has received only limited and basic training on this software. This approach would result in the revision of the original work plan and increase in the budget.

Regarding to capacity of NIS staff, most of them are new. The old staff who have experiences have gone abroad and working outside. Mr. Has Bunton was engaged in overall management, and could not work directly with us. Therefore, we have to form a core staff with capability to handle the new software. with training by an international trainer. People who are trained should be retained in their places. They should not be let out till the data processing is over and even beyond. They should in turn train others as an on going process. In collaborating with JICA on census data processing there should be no overlapping.

**H.E. Chhay Than** Senior Minister thanked UNFPA and JICA for their support. He said that in his capacity as Senior Minister, the Ministry of Planning and Chairman of CTC, he had requested the Ministry of Economic and Finance, Royal Government of Cambodia to sanction budget for the census. According to the report of H.E. San Sy Than, the budget gap was US \$600,000. We hope to receive five million from UNFPA, JICA, and German Government. The first step to be taken is therefore to find enough funds to carry out the census. There are several requests to add questions from other Ministries and agencies. The NIS has included most of them in the draft questionnaire. Mr. Rama Rao had noted that adding questions would increase the time taken for filling the questionnaire for each household and the cost of the census. This morning we have just received some comments and suggestions from the Ministry of Women Affairs regarding gender issues. Those suggestions would be looked into carefully. by the NIS. In the census we should not include questions which are difficult to answer or difficult for the enumerator to understand. We should remember that we have many surveys such as CSES, CDHS etc., Please see whether some questions that are required to be included in the census would be more appropriate for such surveys.

**Mr. Shibanuma Akira** reported that there are two types of assistance from the Government of Japan: 1<sup>st</sup> is technical assistance from JICA and 2<sup>nd</sup> is counterpart fund from the Government of

Japan. Technical support like training. The Japanese government has approved US \$ 900,000 for census building from the counterpart funds. The Ministry of Planning has to request Ministry of Economic and Finance to release it convincing them about the importance of the census and the need for such a building.

Thanking Mr. Harry Lode for his suggestions, Mr. Akira said that JICA could provide training on CSPro and also provide long term or short term consultants to NIS. However there should be a distinct demarcation of the activities of UNFPA and JICA consultants for data processing.

**H.E. Chhay Than** said that the Ministry of Planning has already taken up the matter with the Ministry of Economic and Finance and he was hopeful to get the funds. We have also sent a budget request letter to Ministry of Economic and Finance, and we will draft another letter for counterpart funds.

**Mr. Shibanuma Akira** answered: Counterpart fund is the Japanese's government support to the Cambodian government in kind, then the Cambodian government transfers these kind by selling and put in the national budget. JICA's technical assistance will cover on-the-job training, but in order to fill in the financial gap for implementing the Census, the Ministry of Planning has a chance to request more through the counterpart fund.

**Ms. Bettina Maas** expressed satisfaction at the progress of census activities and their smooth and timely implementation. Concerning the census resources mobilization, UNFPA has addressed d to all donors. UNFPA would support to the extent of \$ 1,5 million. The support of UNFPA would take into account JICA support also. "Everyone counts" is UNFPA's slogan. In the context of census it means every one will be counted.

UNFPA has been assigned to mobilize the resources for supporting and the UNFPA Representative would be contacting the German Government and other donors. The agencies that wish to add more questions in the census which they consider important (e.g. World Bank) could support the census as well since more questions mean extra cost. As several questions have been added in the census questionnaire there is a need for intense training of the enumerators as already pointed out by the consultant. We should review the census questionnaire even though we have almost finalized it since requests for additional questions have been received from the Ministry of Women Affairs. Regarding the census data processing, Mr. Harry Lode had pointed two options. Even though it needs more time, more staff, and more training, UNFPA would recommend the second option because census which is the biggest data collection operation affords a great opportunity for the staff to learn new techniques. Efforts should be made to retain trained staff with the NIS.

**Mr. Duch Sonn** desired that the question on nationality should be included in the census as it is very important to know how many foreigners are living within Cambodia. He also suggested that the word "Mondul" could be dropped from the identification particulars on the census questionnaire, as the current administration structure does not include "Mondul".

**Ms. Bettina Maas** pointed out that generally, all ASEAN countries do not include questions like nationality in the census due to difficulties in collecting reliable data.

**Mr. Nott Rama Rao** clarified some of the points raised as follows:

Before adding any new question in the census we should satisfy ourselves through pretests or otherwise that we would be able to collect fairly reliable answers and that the definitions and concepts are clear. Nationality is not only based on birth but also other criteria, which have to be specified clearly. As it is, no definition has been laid down as yet. According to the Statistics Law, and the Royal Decree on census, the respondents should answer truthfully to the best of his knowledge and the interviewers should record correctly whatever answer the respondents gave. If

a respondent asks for any clarification about nationality or any question for that matter, the interviewers must be able to satisfactorily clarify. In a census sensitive questions are avoided. If there are any questions with which people are not comfortable (like income received) the census may not be successful as it may lack public cooperation.

As a proxy to the nationality question, we are asking about Mother tongue of each person. Also we are asking about place of birth and previous residence. In the 1998 census we included the mother tongue question, but we could not publish population and other characteristics by mother tongue as data collected in respect of some mother tongue speakers were found to be incomplete. Initially for this reason we dropped the mother tongue question from the 2008 census draft questionnaire. But in response to the demand from the Ministry of Education, we added the question on mother tongue instead of nationality. To get good results on this question we have to properly organize the census information and education campaign before the census appealing to the public to answer the census questions truthfully and without any fear. They should be assured that the individual census information collected would be kept confidential by law and would be used only for statistical purposes for the welfare of the people.

**Mr. Rao suggested** that the CTC might take a decision whether to retain or not the remittance question in the draft questionnaire, which is being discussed.

**Mrs. Hang Lina** had reported that in the pretest the response was poor, as the public did not welcome such a question. It was observed that only two percent of households reported, after several probing questions, that they had received remittances and the amount was also very small. Therefore in my opinion, the question may be dropped because it may affect the whole census.

**H.E. San Sy Than** said that at the workshop on the 2010 round of censuses for ASEAN countries at Siem Reap from 31 July to 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2006 it was learnt that none of the ASEAN countries included this question in the census and it is not a must according to UN recommendations. We may therefore drop it. Perhaps we may include it in other surveys.

**H.E. Chhay Than** said that whatever is not appropriate in the census may not be included as it would affect our census. This is a sensitive question that most of the respondents may not provide reliable answer even though we have the Law that expects everyone should provide truthful information. Therefore, we should drop the question on remittance.

**Mr. Nott Rama Rao** thanked the CTC for removing the remittance question. Being the first census after 36 years the 1998 Census had a simpler questionnaire. The 2008 census questionnaire is more comprehensive since we have now staff who are trained in major demographic data collection. We have 4 days for mapping and house listing, and 10 days for census enumeration at around 100 households for each enumerator. So, the questionnaires should be simple and comprehensive so that they can finish the job on time.

The Ministry of Women Affairs had attended the stakeholders meeting and made some recommendations, which were considered while designing the census questionnaire. It should be pointed out in this connection that the gender issues have been fully taken into account in the 2008 Census.

Regarding to the latest recommendations (given in italics below) from the Ministry of Women Affairs the following comments were offered by Mr.Rao:

1- *The nationality:*

It is very difficult to ask about nationality in a census especially when there is no clear-cut definition. It is also very sensitive. Instead questions on mother tongue and migration

may provide information on ethnicity and nationality. These questions are there in the census questionnaire.

2- *Agricultural and land occupied by each household of farmers:*

3- *Land title and*

4- *The signature or thumb prints of couple on the land title certificate:*

These topics ( items 2 to 4) may be considered at the time of agriculture census of Cambodia, as it would be difficult to include in population census.

5- *The sources of drinking water by wet and dry season:*

The main source of drinking water is asked in the census. To ascertain by season would need probing questions for which more time would be needed. Surveys could be undertaken to estimate this.

6- *The distance from home to water sources should be in meter (m) and season:*

The distance is asked as near home (5minutes walk) and away (more than 5 minutes walk) it approximates to 150 meters distance between home and water source.

7- *Who is the most important person in the family responsible for collecting water for family uses:*

This may be included in a survey

8- *Where do women deliver babies?*

Question on person attending (doctor, nurse etc.) on women during delivery is ascertained in the questionnaire.

9- *Family income and who earns the income:*

Income is not normally included in census as data obtained may not be reliable in a census- like operation.

10- *The causes of disability afterbirth and when they become disabled:*

This may be asked in disability sample survey, as it is almost a technical question.

11- *The business size (micro, small, medium, or large):*

This may be considered for the establishment census.

Concluding the debate, **HE Chhaythan** said that the following decisions are taken by the CTC:

- UNFPA and JICA would help us in resources mobilization
- NIS has to draft a letter for counterpart fund
- The census questionnaire is approved for submission to the National Committee after deleting the remittance question
- CTC working groups should be ready to justify our questionnaire
- According to the consultant we have to train more staff on the new technologies. This means that we would select the second option of Mr. Harry Lode
- Training at all levels should be given importance. For the staff who have been trained, their services must be utilized and included in core groups.

Minutes Taker

**Approved**

**HANG LINA**

**CHHAY THAN**

Chairman of Census Technical Committee  
Senior Minister  
Minister of Planning