



2010 POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS

YOU COUNT, SO BE COUNTED

2010 CENSUS NEWS

EVERYONE IN GHANA MUST SUPPORT THE COMING CENSUS

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"From a very early age, I had imbibed the opinion, that it is every man's (and woman's) duty to do all that lay in his (or her) power to leave his (or her) country as good as he (or her) had found it."

(William Cobbett (1763-1835), Writer, Journalist & Reformer)

On 6th August, 2010, the government of Ghana formally announced that Sunday, 26th September 2010 has been designated as Census Night for the 2010 Population and Housing Census.

The Census is a very important national exercise that involves collecting complete and correct information on everyone resident in Ghana - irrespective of age, nationality, civil status, residential status or creed, among others - as at midnight of Census Night (Sunday, 26th September, 2010).

Since 2007, the Ghana Statistical Service has been meticulously planning and preparing to undertake this national exercise in accordance with United Nations recommendations, and the stipulation of the Statistical Law of Ghana (PNDC Law 135 of 1985) which empowers the Government Statistician to conduct any statistical enquiry in the country, including population and housing censuses, among others.

As the Ghana Statistical Service steadily enhances its state of preparedness towards a highly successful Census, it is imperative that everyone resident in Ghana (irrespective of age, nationality, civil status, residential status or creed, among others) take a moment to reflect on the nature, importance and benefits of this national exercise, and why we all must support it.

What is a Population and Housing Census?

A Population Census is the official head count of all persons residing in a nation at a particular point in time. A Housing Census, on the other hand, is an official count of all structures (permanent and temporary) within a nation at a particular point in time. Relating this to Ghana, it simply means that the 2010 Population and Housing Census will tell us how many people are in Ghana **irrespective of their nationality**, and who they are in terms of *age, sex, education, marital status, literacy, educational attainment, occupation, and economic activity*. In addition, the Census will give us access to other information like *where the people reside* in terms of *permanent and temporary residential structures*, and the availability of other vital social services like *water, health, education, and housing conditions*, among others, to the minutest administrative units.

Why It Is Important That Ghana Conducts The 2010 Census

There are several reasons why Ghana must conduct the 2010 Census. First, every national statistical system MUST from time to time update its data base with a national census. This will ensure that Ghana's data systems remain current, accurate and relevant. The last Census conducted in Ghana was in the year 2000. Since censuses are mostly decennial (i.e. conducted in or every 10 years), it is imperative that we update our statistical system if we wish to have current and relevant social, economic and demographic information to assist national, regional and district administrations as well as businesses, industries, the media, academia, research institutions and international organizations in sound evidence-based decision making.

It is important to note that Census data, in combination with macro data from other sources like the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS), the Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire Survey (CWIQ), and Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS), will serve as an invaluable data base on the population, for the government's operations, and for decision-making by the business community and Ghana's development partners. Furthermore, there are several specific benefits of Census data which are considered a sine qua non for successful national and business development. The following are just a few examples of such benefits.

Planning, Implementing and Monitoring Sound Policies

Census data is invaluable in planning because it will provide explicit information on the size, distribution, and characteristics of Ghana's population. This kind of information is indispensable for formulating and monitoring evidence-based policies and programmes that will improve the welfare of the people. In addition, it serves as a guide for evaluating the effectiveness of such policies and programmes for providing basic social sector services. For example, in the area of education, the data can reveal any lack of equality in how quality formal education is accessible to various groups of people spread over various geographical locations.

As an illustration, the data could tell the disparity in formal education between men and women, and between urban and rural populations, which government can address.

Another example can be seen in the provision of pipe-borne water. The demand for water is largely determined by population size. This means that future demand for water is dependent on how large the population will be. Since the Census data is a unique source of information including small area data (up to the one person settlement), it becomes very essential for regional and district level planning.

Thus, current population size will also serve as a basis for developing credible projections of the future population size which can very useful in planning for water supply and other essential social services for the urban and rural areas.

Development Indicators

Census data is useful for both governmental and non-governmental institutions for measuring progress towards national development goals by putting indicators in place and monitoring their implementation. In this way, Government developmental policies/goals on education, health, and housing, among others, can be tracked easily and modified as and when necessary.

Demarcation of Electoral Constituencies

Accurate census data is needed for the efficient and equitable demarcation of electoral constituencies and adjustment of administrative boundaries. This enhances the foundation and means for good governance, and the consolidation of Ghana's democracy. In addition, reliable census data can assist with rational allocation of revenues among districts. Thus, the 2010 Census will be also very useful in this capacity.

Business, Industry and Labour

Census data is very useful to individuals and business, industry and labour institutions especially in Demand Forecasting, Product Development and Marketing, and Location Decisions, among others. For example, information on the size of the population and its distribution at least by age and sex, in the regions and districts, down to small area settlements, will be needed in estimating consumer demands for certain goods and services. The Census will provide such current information. And when businesses use the Census data to decide where to locate factories, shopping centres, banks and offices, it will invariably lead to the creation of more jobs.

Research

Census data is also very critical in the area of research. For example, it can be analyzed to understand the composition of the population and the determinants of population phenomena like urbanization, labour force participation, migration, fertility and mortality for various groups, and can help answer such questions as how and why Ghana's population is changing.

Formulating and Assessing Housing Policies and Programme

Housing data from the 2010 Census will enable planners and policy makers to formulate realistic and relevant housing policies, and design appropriate programmes to meet Ghana's housing needs. For instance, information obtained from the Census on housing quality indicated by the materials used for constructing various housing units, and the availability of facilities like water and sanitation serve as important indicators of the occupants' quality of life. Such information can aid the government in designing housing improvement programmes. Furthermore, data collected from enumerating the floating population (homeless people) will give an exact indication of the housing challenge in various localities.

Disadvantaged Population Groups and Areas

The 2010 Census will provide data that could help government identify disadvantaged or deprived areas and districts, and special population groups like women, children, youth, the elderly and disabled. Such information can help the government establish priorities for action.

Poverty Mapping

Aside helping policy makers to identify deprived and disadvantaged population groups and geographical areas, the 2010 Census data, when combined with other survey data, will tell us where the poor are, why they are poor, and the nature of their lives. Such information will serve as a primary tool for developing a targeted Poverty Reduction Strategy. In addition, it will give the evidence needed to develop and monitor effective development policies. Most importantly, it will serve as a guide for directing resources and programmes to poor people and poor areas.

Persons with Disability

The Census will be an important source of data on persons with disabilities in that it will aid us in assessing the social and living conditions of such people in terms of school attendance, educational attainment, employment, marital status and living arrangements. This information will provide the basis for developing policies to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, and for evaluating the effectiveness of those policies.

Use by the United Nations

Aside Ghana's development partners, donors, investors and other world bodies who need Census information to guide them in planning technical and economic assistance to this country, data realized from censuses are vital to the work of the United Nations system as a whole because they provide inputs for official UN population estimates and projections.

Is The Ghana Statistical Service Ready?

From all indications, the Statistical Service has meticulously prepared to undertake this sophisticated and huge national exercise.

The Individual's Role

Aside the Ghana Statistical Service, every individual has an important role to play in the forthcoming Census. For it to be highly successful, it requires the co-operation and participation of everyone resident in Ghana. Thus, it is very important to note the following: *The 2010 Census will be easy because Census Officials will visit you in the comfort of your own home (no queuing); Be friendly and cooperate with the Census Official; Make an effort to answer every question you are asked because every correct answer provided will help ensure the accuracy of the 2010 Census; the information you give to the Census Official will be treated as private and confidential.*

Finally, everyone resident in Ghana should remember that it is every individual's civic duty to support the 2010 Census because correct and accurate data from the census will assist our national, metropolitan, municipal and district authorities to make effective plans for our educational, health, housing and other socio-economic services. Ultimately, the nation, our development partners, and every individual resident in Ghana will be the beneficiaries of a highly successful 2010 Population and Housing Census. Remember: when it comes to planning for the development of our nation, everyone counts. Help Ghana collect accurate information about each of us to make the planning process a worthwhile exercise. Together, we can all make the 2010 Population and Housing Census a success.