

# Population Estimation Survey (PESS)

Senior Somali PESS staff endorsing questionnaires

## A briefing note on the Population Estimation Survey (PESS) The first comprehensive, nation-wide data collection since 1975

### Objectives of the Population Estimation Survey (PESS):

(i) producing reliable population estimates by regions, rural, urban, nomadic areas, and IDP settlements;

(ii) providing reliable data disaggregated by age, gender and other demographic and socio-economic characteristics for developing and monitoring related strategies and programs;

(iii) developing a sampling frame in support of further surveys and censuses;

(iv) building statistical capacity of responsible institutions, including ministries of planning and concerned line ministries to collect, and analyze disaggregated population data for planning and delivering development programs.

The last successful attempts to gather data on Somalia's population through a census were made in 1975 and 1985/86. However, several challenges had beset both endeavors, with scant data being released from the first census and the results for the second attempt remaining unpublished. Since then, development partners have made several ad hoc attempts to obtain reliable and acceptable figures on the population size and distribution, but with no success.

Following a common consensus among the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) members, UNFPA was endowed the lead agency role to coordinate technical assistance, consultations with donors, building a network of support and management of funds on behalf of Somali authorities. The nationwide large-scale population survey is being conducted by Somali authorities with technical support deployed by UNFPA. The result will be reliable population estimates for the whole country, including regions, urban and rural areas, internally displaced population (IDP) settlements and water points for the nomads.

The information would enable the government to move from a humanitarian relief model of operations towards longer-term recovery and sustainable development, which will include restoring services and systems in support of improving the wellbeing of the people.

**PESS implementation process and accomplishments secured so far:** At the moment, the PESS field work and data collection is under way with the involvement of UN agencies and key national stakeholders. The PESS has succeeded in ensuring the ownership of the process by the national authorities. It has also succeeded in bringing together all the key partners, from time to time, in different fora to discuss and review the survey design, survey instruments, and the way forward including agreeing on the usage of the 1986 pre-war boundaries to avoid duplication and overlaps. In addition, the PESS has ably facilitated the collaboration and interaction of statisticians and managers at every stage of the exercise. This is a healthy sign which has fostered professionalism and sharing of knowledge among the key partners. It is also worth taking note of the PESS accomplishments that have been registered, so far, and include tangible contributions to enhancing statistical knowledge and skills of the concerned national staff in the management of large surveys through trainings, workshops and on-the-job training and equipping the key ministries involved in the survey with data processing equipment.

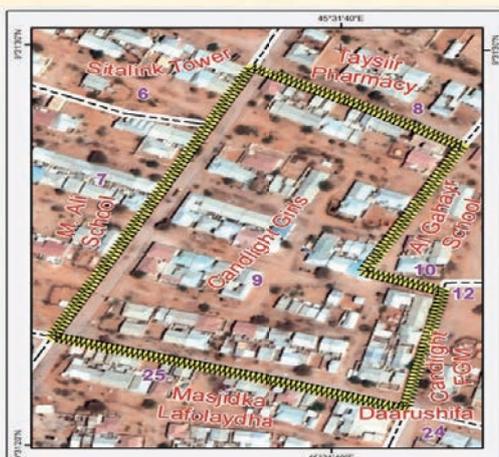
For example, national capacity has been developed in the area of mapping where GPS and GIS techniques have been introduced and implemented by the Somali nationals who have delineated enumeration areas. In this case, the theory has been translated into practice. In view of the above, for the first time in the history; there exist reliable and comprehensive area frames re-aligned with pre-war sub districts (Laantas) and sections (Waxdaas) in the urban areas and segmentation of big selected settlements in the rural settlements has been done. This is an important contribution to statistical development as the sampling frames will soon be available for use in the future household sample surveys. Geo-files for enumeration areas and other primary sampling units have been created for rural and urban areas, water points and IDP settlements. The sampling frames may be used by national institutions, international agencies and organizations intending to carry out surveys in the future.



PESS training, Garowe, Puntland

The development of a GIS system is an input and outcome of the PESS. It has been extensively used to develop enumeration areas for Somalia and in data collection. Another key achievement of the PESS is that its results will directly help to address issues pertaining to poverty mapping, public services, and social development including education.

GIS map of selected social amenities



In addition, the developed GIS system will be used to map, spatially, important community structures such as hospitals, clinics, schools etc. The pictorial information will show the spread of amenities in the regions.

Statistical capacity has been enhanced through the training of nationals in all the aspects of data collection. As part of preparatory process for field enumeration, several training workshops were successfully conducted starting with the mapping phase to field data collection and capture. Some of these workshops attracted participants from all zones who interacted very well. The training programme has envisaged and operationalized training of trainers (TOTs). With respect to data collection and data entry, this has created a pool of skilled personnel for data collection and data entry.

A sound capacity has been developed in the art of designing questionnaires that is the critical survey instrument for collecting data. In addition, other supporting field materials were produced, namely, enumerators' and supervisors' manuals; listing forms and quality control forms.

In September 2013 the PESS team managed to organize a successful UN-Somali joint technical consultative meeting which resulted in an agreement on the field enumeration modalities. This meeting created the necessary momentum for advancing the goals of the PESS to expeditiously carry out the remaining activities leading to the generation of reliable statistics.

**Special case:** PESS is adopting a flexible approach that is relevant to the specific context in estimating population for non-accessible areas. The prevailing security situation in some areas will mean that some sampled areas will not be enumerated. Despite these challenges, PESS has devised creative and statistically viable approaches to estimate population of those areas. In the inaccessible areas attempts will be made to use satellite imagery and WHO immunization data in making population estimates. While for the accessible areas the estimation procedures will follow the standard sampling estimating techniques.

**Data processing and analysis:** The field work is underway in all zones and data processing is envisaged to start immediately after the completed questionnaires have been retrieved from the field. It is against this background that data processing systems have already been designed. For example, the computer data entry screen is being tested. Data processing will take around two months.

The results of the PESS will positively impact on the development of socio-economic planning systems. The PESS sampling frame is an important contribution to statistical infrastructure development that will facilitate future household surveys by national institutions, international agencies and organizations. The survey has laid down the groundwork for the conduct of the Population and Housing Census if and when it will be undertaken possibly in few years' time.

### Appreciation Note

The PESS became a reality due to generous contributions, tangible support and commitment of the donor community and UN organizations, funds and agencies as follows:

**DFID, EU, DANIDA, SIDA, AfDB and Statistics Norway, US Government, FAO, HABITAT, UNCHF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN support office for AMISOM, WFP, WHO,**