

EVERYONE IN GHANA MUST SUPPORT THE COMING CENSUS

“From a very early age, I had imbibed the opinion that it is every man’s duty to do all that lay in his power to leave his country as good as he had found it” – William Cobbett (1763-1835), Writer, Journalist & Reformer.

Very soon the Government will announce a specific date for the commencement of Ghana’s 2010 Population and Housing Census planned for the second half of this year.

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.

As the Ghana Statistical Service steadily enhances its state of preparedness towards a highly successful census, it is imperative that everyone resident in Ghana (both nationals and non-nationals) take a moment to reflect on the nature, importance and benefits of this national exercise.

What is Population and Housing Census?

The Statisticians define a Population Census asenumeration of all persons in a country to a specified time. This enumeration also implies the collection, compilation, evaluation analysis, publication and dissemination of demographic, social and economic statistics relating to the population.

A Housing Census, on the other hand, is the official enumeration of all living quarters (occupied and vacant) and occupants thereof in a country a specified time. This also involves the collection, compilation, evaluation, analysis, publication and dissemination of statistical data pertaining to these living quarters and their occupants. Even though approach type of census is a complete

exercise on its ..., the 2010 Census will be a combination of both a Population and Housing Census.

It will tell us how many people are in Ghana irrespective of their nationality, which they are in terms of age, sex, education, marital status, literacy, educational attainment, occupation, and economic activity. It will also 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 service like water, health, education and housing conditions, among others, the minutest administrative units.

Importance of 2010 Census: There are many reasons for this census. Every national statistical system MUST from time to time update its data use with a national census to ensure that the data systems remain current, accurate and relevant. The last census in Ghana was in 2000.

Since censuses are mostly decennial (conducted in every 19 years), it is operative that we update our statistical system to have current and relevant social, economic and demographic information to assist national, regional and district administrations as well as businesses, industries, the media, academic, research institutions and international organizations in sound residence-based decision making.

In a nutshell, 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 movement operations and decision-making by the business community and Ghana's development partners.

Also, there are many specific benefits of census data which are considered sine qua non for successful national and business development. Among them are Planning, Implementing and monitoring sound policies.

In planning, it provides explicit information the size, distribution, and characteristics of Ghana's population. This information is dispensable for

formulating and monitoring confidence- based policies and programmes that prove the people's welfare. It also serves as a for evaluating the effectiveness of such policies and programmes for providing basic social or services.

For example, in the area of education, the data reveal any lack of equality in how quality formal location is accessible to various groups of people spread over various geographical locations. It could tell the disparity in formal education between men and women, and between urban and rural populations, for government to 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.

Development Indicators: Census data is useful for both governmental and non-government 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.

Business, Industry and Labour: In a nutshell, the census data will be very useful to individuals and business, industry and labour institutions especially in Demand Forecasting, Produce Development 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.