

## **TODOS CONTAMOS II: NATIONAL CENSUSES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION**

Lima, Perú October 23-25

### **A Back to Office Report**

This memorandum reports on the results and key advances of the *Todos Contamos II* Conference in Lima, Perú. The objectives of the conference were to: share recent experiences in the region with new data collection on race and ethnicity; support the next round of countries conducting national censuses within the next 2-3 years; encourage more countries in the region to collect such data; and, promote greater use of such data in analyzes and social policy making; Attached as annexes are the conference agenda (Annex I) and list of participants (Annex II).

#### **I. TODOS CONTAMOS: BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION**

*Todos Contamos II: Los Censos y la Inclusión Social* provided a second forum for regional leaders to advance and promote the incorporation of data on race and ethnicity in national censuses. The conference was a follow-on to *Todos Contamos I* held in November 2000, but represented a significant departure and advancement from this first meeting, including the following:

1. A greater effort was made in inviting “country teams” as participants, that included, for each of the 18 countries, a representative of the national statistical institute, one from an indigenous peoples’ organizations, one representative of a national afro-descendent organization, and for the first time, a government representative from the social policy sector.
2. There has been a greater number of concrete experiences with Census data collection in the region in the previous two years, thus creating a greater base for sharing knowledge and experience.
3. Interest was broadened from the concept of data collection, to the application of data in social policy-making and analysis of socio-economic conditions of excluded groups.

The three-day conference used a wider array of techniques to elicit participation than what might be considered typical in international conferences. In addition to panel presentations on country experiences and data collection, there were key speakers, role-playing, and small working groups. The working groups forum

was used frequently but the composition of the groups were changed frequently. Working groups were continually broken down and reconstituted in different groupings to facilitate a wider range of dialogue and exchange. The different working group types included: (i) by type of institution represented (e.g. indigenous, afro-descendent representatives, Latin American governments, and multilateral organizations); (ii) a balanced mix of representatives from each of the four types of institutions; and (iii) by country. A lighter, but still important part of the conference were role-playing sessions. Sets of four participants were asked to role-play a situation/meeting regarding race and ethnicity in national censuses but representing a different type of organizations than their own (e.g. an afro-descendent would role-play being a director of a national statistical institute; an indigenous leader would role-play being a staff person from a multilateral institution). This enabled attendees to begin to see differently the positions and perspectives of other players.

## **II. MEMBERS OF IDB DELEGATION**

There were seven representatives of IDB/Washington attending and participating in the conference. The delegation was headed by: Christof Kuechemann (SDS, Deputy Manager) and included Mayra Buvinic (SDS/SOC, division chief), Mia Harbitz (RE2/SO2), Carlos Viteri (SDS/IND), Jose Antonio Mejia (SDS/POV), Juliana Pungiluppi (SDS/SOC) and Jacqueline Mazza (SDS/SOC). Also participating from Perú were IDB Representative in Perú, Vladimir Radovic, Odette Zamolla (Social Sector Specialist, CPE), and Teresa Aguilar (CPE).

## **III. KEY RESULTS**

Following is a summary of key results of the conference:

- a. *Participation.* More than 90 participants attended from 18 countries, representing, in particular, a broad array of indigenous peoples' and afro-descendent organizations. This count includes significant participation from both the staff of the IDB and World Bank. Participation throughout the three days was vocal, productive, and well balanced among the representatives from different organizations, governments, and countries. A number of participants noted that the productive atmosphere and respect demonstrated between the different participants had been developed and advanced through participation in a series of multilateral forums since *Todos Contamos I*, most predominantly the Santiago preparatory meeting for the United Nations Conference Against Racism (2000) and the Durban meeting itself (2001).
- b. *IDB Leadership.* The IDB played a leadership role in the organization and planning of the conference, which was organized jointly with the World Bank and INEI-Perú. IDB staff worked in a collaborative fashion with the two institutions, and worked particularly to prepare a comprehensive invitee list of afro-descendent, indigenous, and government-social policy representatives.

This effort was undertaken with the direct support and consultation with the social sector reps in each of the IDB Representations, IND and social sector representatives in RE1, 2, and 3.

- c. *Greater Advances on Indigenous Data Collection.* The broadest key conclusion of the conference is that there have been significant advances in recent years in including census questions regarding indigenous peoples, but less advancement regarding counting those of afro-descendent origin. Indigenous peoples are typically identified either by a question regarding language and/or ethnic self-identification. The question may be what is the language spoken in your childhood, the language of your mother or household. In some countries, asking language is perceived as a less political or subjective question than identification as indigenous (e.g. Aymara, Quiché) but it is an imprecise measure of indigenous identification. Despite these advances, there is significant concern of undercounting of indigenous peoples in recent data collection (e.g. Ecuador). There are many factors that explain or cause underreporting and undercounting. Household surveys and special censuses described in item f are one instrument for analyzing the possible extent of undercounting. A series of complementary actions are required to gain both greater participation, confidence, and use of census data by indigenous peoples.
- d. *More Limited Progress on Afro-descendants/Race.* Only a minority of countries asks a question on race self-identification. Currently only Brazil, Colombia<sup>1</sup>, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Honduras<sup>2</sup>, Jamaica and within the next year, Perú collect data on afro-descendants.<sup>3</sup> Guatemala's upcoming census will ask a question on native language that includes *Garifuna* but this will capture only a proportion of afro-descendants. Language is not a useful indicator in the vast majority of the region for counting afro-descendants. There remain significant differences and debates on how to define race and its identity in different national contexts. Afro-descendent participants, in particular, brought up the important agreement reached at the United Nations conference in Durban on the common defining term of "afro-descendent." Nonetheless, afro-descendent leaders pointed out there is still a need of greater national processes to define and internalize this term or provide terms of identification that resonate with resident black populations. Despite the need for further refinement of the "race question", there was a clear "working attitude" among participants of the need to advance in data collection and identification while continuing to work through the questions of precise definition and identity. Some noted that the process itself of seeking common agreement among afro-descendent groups on how to frame a census or

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<sup>1</sup>Colombia's census in the early 1990s had self-identification question for race but response was consider low for the actual population. The next census has been postponed until 2005.

<sup>2</sup>In the 2001 Census, Honduras had a self-identification question with the category "negro-inglés and garifuna, not the wider category of afro-honduran or afro-descendent.

<sup>3</sup> Even in these countries there is concern that afro-descendants are still not well captured in national data. Low reporting is a particular concern in Colombia for example.

survey questions was a concrete and tangible way to open up dialogue and discussion.

- e. *Agreement on Need for Participation of Ethnic/Racial Groups at all Stages of Process.* There was widespread agreement that afro-descendent and indigenous organizations and their constituents needed to play an active and participatory role in all phases of the census process. The leaders of afro-descendent and indigenous peoples' organizations, as well as directors and technicians from the national statistical institutes themselves shared this opinion. Attendees made a clear distinction between "participation" and "consultation," consultation being at a much lower level of meetings to inform groups rather than involve them. The phases for participation and "ownership" of the process span the development, implementation, and assessment of census data, and include the tasks of developing and testing questions regarding race and ethnicity, undertaking the initial surveys laying the foundation of the censuses, training afro-descendent and indigenous peoples to help conduct the surveys and interpret the results, carrying out education and awareness-raising among excluded groups, and, encouraging dissemination and use of data by afro-descendents and indigenous groups.
  
- f. *Expansion beyond Census Instruments.* The conference also presented concrete examples of special surveys or indigenous censuses (e.g. Paraguay, Mexico), which are used as more focused tools to collect more comprehensive data on a broader range of socio-economic characteristics of target populations than the national census is able to. A number of representatives from national statistical institutes commented that typically, given the need to contain the length and nature of national censuses, there are one or two at best census questions that can capture race and ethnicity. The more detailed data collection, which can complement and deepen national census data, comes from household surveys, special surveys, or indigenous censuses. The afro-descendent representatives proposed in their list of actions that countries consider developing and testing afro-descendent surveys based on the positive results of indigenous surveys to date. In addition, because the census is taken every ten years in the best of cases, there is a need to advance as well on household surveys, special censuses, and periodic surveys. These instruments have the added advantage of being able to test alternative reporting mechanisms to self-identification, such as interviewee classification. Self-identification has notable constraints. It has clearly been found that some respondees may not want to answer affirmatively as being afro-descendent or indigenous for fear of discrimination, societal prejudice, or even their own lack of identification with such a group. This is not to underestimate the value and importance of national censuses, but only to make clear the need for a broader net. It was still widely

recognized that censuses are a fundamental and vital data tools needed to do good survey work.<sup>4</sup>

- g. *Role of Political Dialogue – It’s Not Just Technical.* Many participants emphasized the importance of understanding that incorporating race and ethnicity in the national censuses was a highly political process, not simply a technical one. They stressed understanding that the technical issues, such as developing, testing, and applying the appropriate survey question(s) could not be advanced without a supportive political environment. Participants discussed how national dialogues on race and ethnicity, the incorporation of race and ethnicity in social programs, needed to be seen as part of the policy framework that supports advancing on census data. The political dialogue needed not only to be “vertical” from government to affected groups but “horizontal” among and between indigenous and afro-descendent populations.
- h. *Need to Concentrate on National “Todos Contamos” in Next Phase.* Attendees widely agreed to the utility of regional forum for sharing experiences and techniques across countries and stimulating more and more countries in the region to develop, refine, and advance on data collection on race and ethnicity. Some commented on the rarity, and in some cases, first time encounters between leaders of indigenous and afro-descendent organizations and those in national statistical institutes at *Todos Contamos II*. Developing the specific questions and having excluded groups feel comfortable in responding to census surveyors requires an investment in national processes of awareness-raising and consensus-building. Myrna Cunningham of Nicaragua argued that race needed to become more broadly understood as part of an individual’s self-esteem and cultural identification, if not, there would continue to persist problems of low self-identification with race. In different sessions throughout the three days, participants raised the need to fund and organize *Todos Contamos’* at the national level in countries in the region to build the public support needed to fully incorporate race and ethnicity in data collection and public policy making. The staff representatives of the multilateral organizations representatives, in particular, raised the issue of the need for supporting and fomenting national processes when they presented the conclusions of one of the working group sessions. In addition, given the positive outputs of *Todos Contamos II*, Argentina, through the director of Argentina’s Census, Alejandro Giusti, offered to serve as the host of a third follow-on regional conference when the time was appropriate.

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<sup>4</sup> Most surveys rely on the framework set in the censuses to determine adequate sample sizes, survey type, and to provide the ability to extrapolate survey results to the national population.

#### IV. LESSONS AND POTENTIAL FUTURE STEPS FOR IDB

This section reflects a brief assessment of how the lessons and experiences presented at *Todos Contamos II* can help inform or shape future Bank research, country papers, and technical support towards achieving incorporation of data on race and ethnicity in the region on a more universal and mainstreamed basis.

To summarize Bank activities, the IDB was the principal sponsor of *Todos Contamos I* and a key organizer of *Todos Contamos II*. These regional conferences were advanced in the context of a small but growing pipeline of loans to national statistical institutes to conduct national censuses. A number of these loans included support to improve data collection and identification on race and ethnicity. The Bank, as well, has funded the improvement of data collection techniques through the MECOVI Program and some technical cooperations to finance specialized studies and surveys on race and ethnicity.

To immediately follow-up on *Todos Contamos II*, SDS/SOC has organized a specialized debriefing and seminar on data on race and ethnicity for November 18<sup>th</sup> for IDB staff and invited guests to further discuss lessons from *Todos Contamos II*, to provide Bank staff with information on existing census, household survey, and social data on race and ethnicity for use in Bank country papers, and discuss current and potential operations (both loans and technical cooperations) that can be directed towards supporting greater data collection on race and ethnicity.

Some of key lessons that could help guide Bank operations, technical support, and research in the near future can be draw from the above key results of the conference. These conclusions are in concert with and draw on specific commitments made in the Bank *Action Plan to Combat Social Exclusion Based on Race and Ethnicity*. Suggestions for the IDB include:

1. *Support to National Censuses/ Statistical Institutes: Lessons for Incorporating Race and Ethnicity.* The Bank has financed a series of loans to support the development and implementation of national censuses (e.g. Bolivia, Honduras, Guatemala, Paraguay, Ecuador) with future loans in preparation (e.g. Nicaragua). *Todos Contamos II* participants emphasized the need for early participation of indigenous and afro-descendent organizations in the planning, survey design and implementation of national censuses. This emphasis on participation can be incorporated into loan operations, or, supported in its preliminary stages in technical cooperations if execution is needed to precede the start date for the loan. Loan operations can more directly support the development and testing in rural and urban settings questions on race and ethnicity as well as sample surveys as a lead-up to censuses.

2. *Support to Develop New Surveys, Analysis on Race and Ethnicity.* An important point raised in the conference is the need to go beyond the census to expanding data on race and ethnicity through non-census instruments. The Bank has begun doing so in a limited number of operations, these include both special and household surveys and surveys taken to support project development. This can be accomplished through either loan or grant operations. The MECOVI program is a key technical assistance vehicle for countries in the region to improve data collection and measurement on poverty, and within this, race and ethnicity. MECOVI, however, doesn't have its own independent resources but draws on existing Bank funds (e.g. Fund for Special Operations (FSO), grant funds). MECOVI technical assistance can be drawn on in many ways, one way suggested by the MECOVI team, reflective of *Todos Contamos II*, is through conducting training and survey design to be carried out by indigenous or afro-descendent organizations.
3. *Supporting National Dialogues on Race and Ethnicity.* The *Todos Contamos II* conference made clear the importance of raising the political dimension of race and ethnicity in order to provide the national context and support needed to have race and ethnicity openly discussed. This policy dialogue can be best advanced directly, but also within the context of broader dialogues on poverty and social policy.
4. *Greater Use and Promotion of Data on Race and Ethnicity.* In order to encourage national governments to collect, process, analyze and disseminate data on race and ethnicity, the Bank itself could assume a more prominent role as a consumer and promoter of this data. This includes using available information to the best extent possible in country papers and project preparation, requesting such information from member governments, and supporting research which utilizes this data to better understand how social exclusion functions in the region.
5. *Strategic and As-Needed Support to Conferences on Race and Ethnicity/Greater National Focus.* It was clear from the excellent job done by INEI-Perú in organizing the on-the-ground logistics of *Todos Contamos II*, that subsequent IDB and World Bank support may not be needed for actually organizing the conference (as in this case), but rather for financially supporting executing institutions in the region to carry out regional conferences based on detailed proposals. As the learning curve in how to organize such conferences has been steep and interest high, it makes more sense to use the know-how in the region. IDB (and World Bank) technical support may be more urgent for *Todos Contamos'* at the national level, particularly in Central America where data advances have been more limited. In the case of Nicaragua, for example, a loan is in preparation for the 2005 census and, as a result of *Todos Contamos II*, INE-Nicaragua is developing a proposal for a regional (Central America)

*Todos Contamos* initiative, which would support advances in preparation for the 2005 census.

15 November 2002

Attachments:

Annex I – Agenda

Annex II – List of Participants