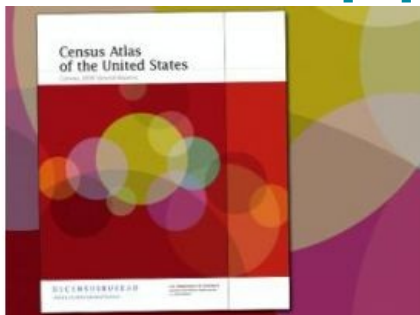


# Seven Billion and Still Counting (and Mapping)



The structure of ICA research and development in the discipline of cartography is clear to regular readers of this column. The ICA Commissions listed to the left have been approved by the association's General Assembly for 2011-2015 and proposals (including Terms of Reference) have been made. It is acknowledged that the Commissions' remits do not cover every aspect of cartography, and new topics of immediate interest may arise, unforeseen by the governing General Assembly. The Executive Committee therefore can appoint short-term, focused Working Groups, specifically designed to address issues of immediate importance. In 2011-2015, several new Working Groups will join the list of research bodies shown on this page. During the 2007-2011 period, a Working Group on Census Cartography was established. This was primarily in response to United Nations

activity in this area. The ongoing (2005-2014) United Nations Statistical Commission World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses had been approved in March 2005 and the cartographic community had a role to play in ensuring that the mapping of contemporary census data was optimised. The UN update to their census mapping handbook triggered the realisation that ICA needed to be involved. The Working Group therefore provided a forum for statistical agencies to discuss topics related to census cartography. Its ambitious terms of reference included:

## **Sharing and exchanging information on mapping methodologies for censuses by:**

- collaborating with cartographic units in statistical agencies to document mapping processes that support field operations;
- encouraging statistical organisations to produce cartographic products to accompany the use of statistical data;
- identifying challenges in census mapping operations;
- conducting workshops that present best practices in census cartography and census mapping operations, new developments and technical innovations.

## **Encouraging the use of new technologies and approaches supporting census mapping by:**

- demonstrating successful mapping technology ventures;
- identifying methods for improved harmonisation of data;
- exploring cartographic techniques for effective communication of statistical data themes.

## **Serving as a forum for census organisations that promote census mapping activities by:**

- using ICA-sponsored workshops and conferences for regional meetings of census cartographers;
- encouraging sponsoring organisations such as the United Nations to participate in theme tracks of the International Cartographic Conference.

The Working Group, under chair Timothy Trainor, Chief of the Geography Division, US Census Bureau, participated in and organised formal meetings including: a) Census Summit - GIS for Census and Statistical Agencies (San Diego, USA, August 2008) which covered aspects of a traditional census including development of enumeration areas, data collection, statistical analysis and data dissemination; b) Working Group meeting (Santiago, Chile, November 2009) which focused on topics of interest as many nations prepared for national censuses between 2009 and 2012; c) Caribbean Community Census meeting (San Diego, USA, July 2010) which was an information-sharing session between the United States and the Caribbean Statistical Agency; and d) Symposium of the Census Cartography Working Group - Cartographic Advances in Census Data Collection and Dissemination (Orlando, USA, November 2010) which covered topics ranging from census mapping techniques for data collection to thematic and reference mapping for data dissemination.

As we welcomed the seven billionth inhabitant of our planet at the end of 2011, the need for quality in census cartography becomes ever-more urgent. ICA hopes that its initiative has demonstrated the need for good supportive mapping for census initiatives worldwide.

