

Caroline Abel: Dissemination of provisional results – National Bank of Seychelles' Population & Housing Census 2022

Opening remarks by Ms Caroline Abel, Governor of Central Bank of Seychelles, at the dissemination of the provisional results of the Population and Housing Census 2022, Eden Island, 31 August 2022.

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Honourable Leader of Government Business in the National Assembly,
Honourable Leader of the Opposition,
Principal Secretaries,
Chief Executive Officers,
Representatives of the Roman Catholic and Anglican Dioceses,
Representatives of the Civil Society,
District Administrators,
Members of the Media,
Census Commissioner,
Staff of the National Bureau of Statistics,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good morning to you all.

I am honoured, as the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), to welcome you all to today's event - the dissemination of the provisional results of the recently-conducted Population and Housing Census.

Detailed data collected across a wide range of statistical areas related to population and housing, allows for disaggregation by geographic areas, for example districts and sub-districts, as well as small population groups. Given that the census provides fundamental information for monitoring the progress of a country and its people over intervals, timely dissemination of good quality census data is crucial for planning, policy formulation, reporting and monitoring of targets at the national, regional and international levels. Notably, information from the census serves to monitor our progress on the various goals and targets of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063.

Prior to the most recent exercise, the last Population and Housing Census was carried out in 2010, with the next exercise due in 2020. However, the realities of the Covid-19 pandemic meant that the 2020 census had to be put on hold, in adherence to the public health measures that were in place. Despite the challenges, the pandemic presented opportunities for the development and use of alternative approaches and technology to improve on data collection and quality.

In the 2020 round of population and housing censuses, all African countries which have taken or are developing their censuses are moving away from the paper-based approach towards a digital approach to data collection. At this juncture, I would like to commend the Census Commissioner and the leadership of the NBS for adopting digital technology in the form of electronic data collection through Computer Assisted Personal

Interview (CAPI) using tablets, to carry out the first-ever digital population and housing census in Seychelles. This is in line with the 7th Statistical Commission recommendation for a transition from manual to digital systems and use of improved methods and new technologies to increase the reliability and accessibility of census products and other statistics in a timely manner.

I would also like to extend our gratitude to our external partners, namely the United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA) and the African Centre for Statistics of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). Albeit not being present today, both partners provided guidance and technical support remotely through virtual sessions with staff of the NBS, as well as through physical presence on the ground during the pilot testing phase in the Anse Aux Pins district in November 2021 and during the main census period in April this year.

Through the support and training provided modernisation, transformation and real-time monitoring of the field work operations were made possible. Without their continuous support with the digitisation and testing of the tool, this first-ever digital census would not have been possible.

Our sincere appreciation is also being extended to our local stakeholders who provided offices in the various regions across the islands that served as a base and point of contact for the regional supervisors and their respective field teams throughout the census period. On behalf of NBS, I wish to thank the Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs, and the District Administrators for their cooperation and support, and for making available facilities at the DA offices.

Sincere appreciation also goes to the NBS Staff and the volunteers who went door-to-door, sometimes to the same house on a number of occasions, to ensure that the maximum proportion of the population was covered. We would not have completed this census exercise without them.

Today's event is proof of the advantages that a digital census brings in efficiency and timeliness, as the provisional results are being released in record time compared to previous censuses conducted manually, when it took many months and even years before provisional and final results became available.

While the detailed and broad thematic report of Population and Housing Census 2022 will be published in the next few months, given the time required to fully analyse the data from various modules that were in the questionnaire which you responded to when your households were visited, today's event will provide a snapshot of the key results and findings.

In conclusion, I can comfortably say that the census exercise was completed successfully, and the challenges faced during this exercise will be documented as lessons learnt that will inform future censuses and other digital data collection undertakings.

Ladies and Gentlemen, with these few words, I thank you for your attention and I hope that you will find the event insightful.

Thank you.