

**Background note by Ms. Keiko Osaki-Tomita  
Chief, Demographic and Social Statistics Branch  
United Nations Statistics Division  
New York**

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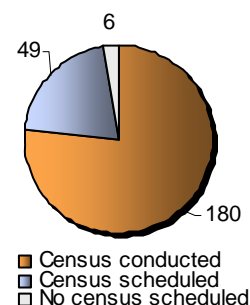
## **Data Collection on International Migration**

UN Statistics Division

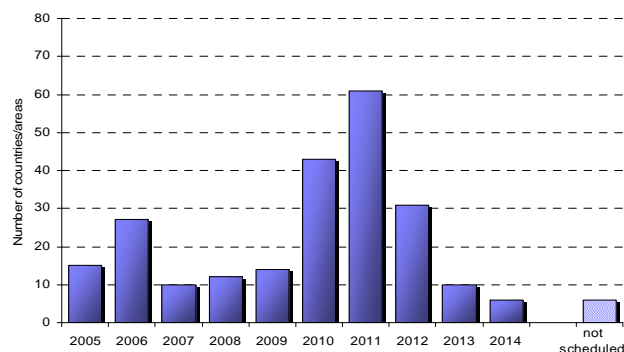
The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) collects, compiles and disseminates global statistical information, develops standards and norms for statistical activities, and support countries' efforts to strengthen their national statistical systems. One major aspect of the Division's programme of work deals with demographic and social statistics, including international migration statistics. This note examines the availability of international migration statistics from population and housing censuses, and presents the status of reporting migration statistics by countries to the United Nations.

### **I. Progress of 2010 Population and Housing Census Programme (as of 1 January 2012)**

The population census is the primary source of basic benchmark statistics, enumerating every person within a defined territory, including international migrants. The 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme urges countries to conduct a population and housing census at least once during the period from 2005 to 2014 (the 2010 census round). In the 2010 census round, as of 1 January 2012, 180 out of 235 countries or areas had conducted a census (covering 87 per cent of the world population), 49 had scheduled a census by 2014 and six had not yet scheduled any census.

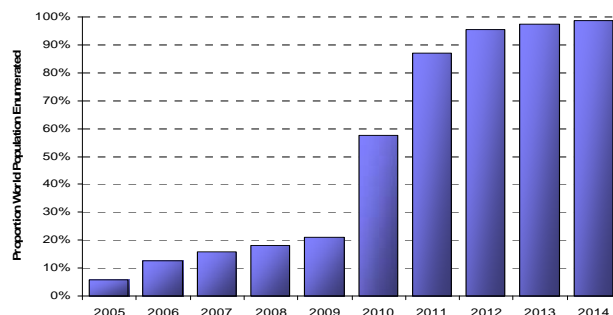


The peak year of the 2010 census round<sup>1</sup> was 2011 when 61 countries or areas conducted a census. In 2010 alone, over 2.5 billion persons (36.4 per cent of the world population) were enumerated in 43 countries or areas.



<sup>1</sup> First census for every country only, some countries conduct m

By the end of 2014, over 97 per cent of all countries and areas are expected to have conducted a census comprising 98.9 per cent of the estimated world population.



## II. Information Relevant to International Migration Collected through Population Censuses

Population censuses provide the most comprehensive source of internationally comparable information on international migration. Population censuses generally include three questions that can generate information relevant to international migration: (a) country of birth; (b) citizenship, and (c) year or period of arrival in the country. The inclusion of these topics in a census questionnaire has been encouraged in international statistical standards such as the *United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2*, published in 2008, by listing them as core topics.

The collection of information on “country of birth” from a census identifies people who were born outside the country of enumeration and ever migrated to the country at some point in their lifetime. “Citizenship” represents the particular bond between an individual and his/her State. Because citizenship is a decisive factor determining a person’s rights in a country and often used to determine who is subject to control when crossing international boundaries, legal nationality is used customarily as an identifying factor for international migrants. Additional questions on year and month of arrival in the country of enumeration permit the calculation of the duration of migration and the classification of migrant population by time of arrival.

UNSD’s preliminary analysis of census topics shows that during the 2010 census round, the majority of the 119 countries or areas which provided a census questionnaire to UNSD, collected information on “country of birth” and/or “citizenship” (see table 1). This suggests that data on migrant stock would be available from a significant number of countries worldwide, if countries or areas were committed to produce and to disseminate the information in a timely manner. Many countries also attempt to capture information on international migration from the last census round by adding questions to the traditional questions used to collect information on the current round of censuses.

Table 1. Number of countries or areas which included migration-related questions in a census questionnaire

	Number	Per cent
Countries or areas conducted a census in 2010 Round*	180	
Censuses for which questionnaires were analysed**	119	100
Question(s) on "COUNTRY OF BIRTH"	91	76
Question(s) on "CITIZENSHIP"	85	71
Question(s) on "YEAR OR PERIOD OF ARRIVAL"	51	43
Question(s) on topics relevant to international migration other than the above	73	61

Notes:

Data are as of 1 January 2012.

\* Including countries which "censuses" is based on population registers.

\*\* In case a country/area conducted more than one census in this round only the first census is considered here.

### III. Collection of Data on Migrant Stock through Demographic Yearbook Data Collection System

Given that the 2010 Census round has almost reached its midpoint and that the majority of countries worldwide have conducted a population and housing census by the end of 2011, UNSD has intensified its efforts to collect key official demographic statistics from censuses. In this regard, Demographic Yearbook census questionnaires have been sent to countries that already conducted a census. Attempts have been made to collect data from a census conducted not only in the current census round (2005-2014), but also in the previous round (1995-2004), if countries have not yet provided such information to UNSD.

The Demographic Yearbook census questionnaire on general population characteristics collects in tabular form the following information relevant to international migration<sup>2</sup>. The figure in the right column of table 2 refers to the number of countries or areas that reported the data based on a census conducted since 1995. As of January 2012, the data on foreign-born population were made available by 111 countries and areas and those on foreign population were furnished by 98 countries and areas, although less data are available if classified by additional characteristics. It is expected that more information will be available in the future, as a significant number of countries will complete the tabulation of census data of the 2010 round and disseminate results.

Table 2. Number of countries or areas that reported the data on migrant stock based on a census

Information collected	Number
Native and foreign-born population by age and sex	111
Foreign-born population by country of birth, age and sex	83
Foreign-born population (15 years and over) by country of birth, educational attainment	4
Population by citizenship status, age and sex	98
Foreign population by country of citizenship by age and sex	74
Foreign population (15 years and over) by country of citizenship, educational attainment	1
Economically active foreign-born by occupation, age and sex	50

<sup>2</sup> Census questionnaires sent to countries are available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dybquest.htm>

The national data on migrant stock and its characteristics made available to UNSD are compiled and disseminated electronically through the UNdata portal<sup>3</sup> (<http://data.un.org/>) as well as the web-based Demographic Yearbook datasets (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dybcensusdata.htm>).

#### IV. Collection of Flow Statistics of International Migration through Demographic Yearbook Data Collection System

After an interruption of several years, in April 2011, UNSD resumed the collection of data on annual migration flows through the Demographic Yearbook collection system. UNSD sent a questionnaire on international travel and migration statistics<sup>4</sup> to national statistics offices (NSOs)<sup>5</sup> and the following information is now collected in tabular form on a regular basis:

Table 3. Type of flow statistics collected through Demographic Yearbook data collection system

Inflows
Annual inflows by reason for admission and sex
Annual inflows by purpose of stay abroad and sex
Number of incoming international migrants by citizenship status, age and sex
Number of incoming foreign migrants by country of citizenship and sex
Number of incoming international migrants by previous country of usual residence and sex

Outflows
Annual outflows by status at time of departure and sex
Annual outflows by purpose of going abroad and sex
Number of departing international migrants by citizenship status, age and sex
Number of emigrating citizens by future country of usual residence and sex.

By January 2012, UNSD received replies to this inquiry from 58 countries or areas. Out of these, 24 countries indicated that they did not have the statistics requested, or the collection and compilation of these statistics were the responsibility of offices other than national statistical offices. Indeed, in many countries, flow statistics on international migration are derived from administrative records such as registers of foreigners, work or stay permits, or from the collection of information at national borders.

Consequently, only 34 countries could offer flow statistics on international migration to UNSD. Many countries do not have a single administrative system devoted to collecting and compiling flow statistics; often, the information is collected by administrative offices other than the national statistical office. It remains to be seen if the availability of flow statistics on international migration can improve in the foreseeable future.

<sup>3</sup> The dataset on 1) foreign-born population by country of birth and educational attainment and 2) Foreign population by country of citizenship and educational attainment, are not released to UNdata, because a few countries could furnish the data.

<sup>4</sup> Census questionnaires sent to countries are available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dybquest.htm>

<sup>5</sup> The questionnaire has been sent to all but Eurostat countries.