

ACTIVITIES RELATED TO INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

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The present report reviews activities regarding the development of statistical standards and methods as well as those related to data collection and dissemination, all implemented by the United Nations Statistics Division during 2002-2004 and provides an outline of future plans in the area of international migration statistics¹.

A. STANDARDS AND METHODS

1. Activities 2002-2004

One of the major mandates of the United Nations Statistics Division is the development of statistical standards and methods in order to assist countries in building their national statistical capacities and to ensure comparability at the international level in different fields of statistics. Consequently, the *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1²* has been used as a methodological tool for improving national systems of capturing data on international migrant flows.

In the past two years the United Nations Statistics Division concentrated on the implementation of these recommendations at the national level by organizing, in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the *United Nations Workshop on Improving the Compilation of International Migration Statistics*, held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 15 to 17 September 2003³. The major objective of the Workshop was to introduce the recommendations for the compilation of international migration flows, to examine the sources of data and national practices for compiling international migration statistics and to assess the feasibility of compiling international migration flow statistics using the framework recommended by the United Nations. In its conclusions, the Workshop stated that the Recommendations primarily fulfill the purpose of demographic analysis and that there is need to broaden their scope to cover diverse descriptive and analytical needs required for different policy purposes, including various types of descriptive analysis such as trade in services, employment and human resources.

Another major methodological standard that has an impact on the framework for the collection of statistics relevant to international migration is the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 1⁴*, currently under review. An Expert Group Meeting⁵ was conducted to review critical issues in population and housing censuses in September 2004. It recommended that the next revision of the *Principles and Recommendations* take into consideration the importance of population and housing censuses in collecting internationally comparable statistics on international migration and to address various other issues that emerged during the 2000 round of census data collection process.

In the area of international migration, for example, data on *place of birth* and *citizenship* are particularly relevant for the study of international migration. In a particular country, one variable might be more relevant than the other. For some countries the focus is shifting towards place of birth due to the problem of dual citizenship and the difficulty of tracking changes in citizenship. In such cases, it might be important to introduce an additional variable, *citizenship at birth*. Another example is to recognize the rising importance of presenting information on the foreign or foreign-born population by level of educational attainment, given the fact that both receiving and sending countries are increasingly concerned with this characteristic of migrants.

2. Planned activities

The planned work on standards and methods in regard to statistics on international migration in the forthcoming period will be based on workshops and expert group meetings, as follows:

a. Workshop

A United Nations workshop on international migration statistics is being planned by the United Nations Statistics Division in collaboration with ESCAP, to be held in Bangkok, Thailand, in March or April 2005. The purpose of this workshop is to assess the feasibility of using United Nations recommendations for national purposes of monitoring international migration and to provide an overview of national capacity to compile data on stocks and flows of international migrants. The expected outcomes are:

- Assess the feasibility of implementing the United Nations *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1* at national, regional and global levels, based on the workshop and national technical reports submitted to the workshop, as well as on national and regional practices in the collection and dissemination of international migration statistics;
- Recommend ways to enhance national capacities to provide statistics on the flows of international migrants.

b. Expert Group Meetings

The United Nations Statistics Division is planning a series of expert group meetings from 2005 to 2007 on issues related to the United Nations 2010 World Programme of Population and Housing Censuses⁶. The following issues will be addressed in the context of international migration. The expected outcomes are:

- Incorporating guidelines on assessing migrant stocks into the revision of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 1*;
- Providing guidance on the content of the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* Census Questionnaire to enable the assessment of migrant stocks in countries participating in the World Programme.

The schedule and topics of these meetings are under discussion and will be posted on the Demographic and Social Statistics Branch web site⁷ as soon as they become available.

B. DATA COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION

1. Activities 2002-2004

The United Nations Statistics Division collects national demographic and social statistics through six *Demographic Yearbook* Questionnaires from national statistical authorities and disseminates the data at the international level. Migrant stock data are collected through two census questionnaires:

- Population Census Questionnaire on General Characteristics: Collects data on population by country of birth and citizenship.
- Population Census Questionnaire on Economic Characteristics: Collects data on the economically active foreign-born population by occupation, age and sex.

This data collection is ongoing. Currently around seventy countries and areas have provided data from the 2000 round of censuses (see table 1).

As for migrant flows, the past two years were dedicated to the adjustment of the *Demographic Yearbook* questionnaire. The purpose of the revision is to make the questionnaire fully consistent with the revised *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1* in terms of concepts and definitions. The revised questionnaire is being tested to obtain information on the relevance of the questionnaire to country practices and the problems faced in filling it. The first tests were performed in the above-mentioned United Nations workshop held in Geneva in 2003. The questionnaire is currently being tested by three countries of the Pacific Islands Community.

The dissemination of data on international migration from the *Demographic Yearbook* system in the past two years has been limited to responding to ad hoc requests from users.

2. Planned activities

The United Nations Statistics Division continues to collect data on stocks of migrants from national population censuses and is planning to undertake additional activities in order to increase the coverage, such as the planned workshop and the expert group meetings⁸ to ensure that data available at national offices based on census results are effectively reported to the *Demographic Yearbook* system.

For the questionnaire on flow of migrants, another round of testing is planned to take place simultaneously with the United Nations workshop on international migration in the ESCAP region⁹. The full deployment of this questionnaire is planned for the end of 2005 to all national statistical offices (over 230). In addition, the United Nations Statistics Division plans to work closely with the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) in order to consolidate the questionnaires and data collection operations on international migration.

In the area of data dissemination, it is planned that international migration stock statistics for the last two census rounds (1985-2004) will be available to the public both electronically and in print by the end of 2005¹⁰. These statistics are collected through the *Demographic Yearbook* Census Questionnaires. Simultaneously, meta-data related to international migration statistics and reported to the *Demographic Yearbook* system will be reviewed and made available to the public online.

D. SUMMARY

1. Revisions and adjustments

In the field of international migration statistics the United Nations Statistics Division plans to work on the updates, revisions and adjustments of the following instruments:

- *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 1*
- *Demographic Yearbook* Census Questionnaires
- *Demographic Yearbook* Questionnaire on International Travel and Migration Statistics

2. Dissemination

Data on the international migrant from 1985 to 2004 will be available online and also in print by the end of 2005 as a special topic of the *Demographic Yearbook*. National practices in the collection and compilation of migration statistics collected for the purposes of the above-mentioned workshops and expert group meetings are planned to be reviewed and made available on the Demographic and Social Statistics Branch website.

Table 1. Number of countries and areas by region that provided statistics on international migration stock to the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* at least once, 1995-2004

Regions	Data provided on				Total number of countries that provided some data on migrant stocks
	Size of foreign-born population	Population by citizenship	Population by country of birth	Economically active foreign-born population by occupation	
Africa	5	7	2	-	10
North America	11	5	8	4	9
South America	-	1	1	2	4
Asia	9	14	6	4	17
Europe	21	17	18	12	23
Oceania	5	2	3	2	6
TOTAL	51	46	38	24	69

Figure 1. Countries and areas that provided statistics on the international migrant stock to the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* at least once, 1995-2004¹¹



NOTES

¹ The Statistics Division presented a report in 2002 to the first Coordination Meeting on International Migration - *Activities of the United Nations Statistics Division on International Migration*, Document No: UN/POP/MIG/2002/14, July 2002. It provided a summary on United Nations Statistics Division activities in the areas of international migration statistics, as well as overview of planned activities.

² United Nations publication, ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M58/Rev.1, Sales No. E.98. XVII.14

³ The full report is available at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/wshops/migr_0904/Genevareport.pdf.

⁴ United Nations publication, ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/67/Rev.1, Sales No. E.98.XVII.8

⁵ Expert Group Meeting to Review Critical Issues Relevant to the Planning of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses, New York, 15-17 September 2004. All documents are available online at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/egm/CensusEGM04/default.htm>

⁶ Details on the United Nations 2010 World Programme of Population and Housing Censuses are available at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/egm/Symposium04/docs/AC97_1.pdf and http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/egm/Symposium04/docs/AC97_2.pdf

⁷ <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/default.htm>

⁸ For more details, please see Section B.

⁹ For more details, please see Section B.

¹⁰ For more details, please see <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dybschedule.htm>.

¹¹ The designations used in this publication have been provided by the competent authorities. Those designations and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.