

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.

1.

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.

As for migrant flows, the past two years were dedicated to the adjustment of the *Demographic Yearbook*

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

<i>Regions</i>	<i>Data provided on</i>				<i>Total number of countries that provided some data on migrant stocks</i>
	<i>Size of foreign-born population</i>	<i>Population by citizenship</i>	<i>Population by country of birth</i>	<i>Economically active foreign-born population by occupation</i>	
Africa	5	7	2	-	10

NOTES

¹ The Statistics Division presented a report in 2002 to the first Coordination Meeting on International Migration -