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Items for discussion and decision: migration statistics

Migration statistics

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2020/211 and past practices. It sets forth recent work undertaken by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the United Nations Expert Group on Migration Statistics in 2019 and 2020 to fulfil the requests of the Statistical Commission contained in its decision 50/117. In particular, the report covers: (a) the main findings of the global consultation conducted to gauge concepts, definitions and data sources used by countries; (b) the key elements of the proposed revised overarching conceptual framework and accompanying definitions on international migration and mobility; and (c) other work including capacity development, data and indicators work, and early preparations for the third International Forum on Migration Statistics. The report also provides information on the plans and priorities for the Statistics Division and the Expert Group.

Action to be taken by the Commission includes endorsing the revised overarching conceptual framework and accompanying definitions for international migration and mobility as the core elements of the upcoming revision of the *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration*, and providing guidance on the plans and priorities of the Statistics Division and the Expert Group, in particular regarding the development of a set of recommended topics and indicators on international migration and mobility in line with the indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (see para. 57).

* E/CN.3/2021/1.



I. Introduction

1. The Statistical Commission last discussed international migration statistics at its fiftieth session,¹ when it welcomed the recognition of the importance of data for evidence-based policies and the new mandate given to the Commission under objective 1 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration,² and approved the terms of reference of the United Nations Expert Group on Migration Statistics. Among other things, the Commission requested the finalization of the revision of the *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1*,³ of 1998 and additional work to harmonize concepts and definitions related to international migration, taking into consideration changing patterns of migration and relevant international standards adopted over the past two decades. The Commission further requested to ensure that those concepts were flexible to fit the needs of national policymaking while promoting the comparability of migration statistics at the international level in order to address one of the main shortcomings of the 1998 recommendations.⁴

2. As the Secretary-General noted in a previous report on international migration statistics,⁵ increases in migration and changes in migration patterns, as well as the call for data disaggregated by migratory status to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, have raised the demand for capturing such phenomena with accurate, granular and timely data.

3. Data on migration are also needed for estimating populations and understanding demographic change. With increasing life expectancy and declining fertility across most countries in the world, migration has become an increasingly important component of both demographic and social change. Despite unprecedented needs, statistics on international migration remain sparse. For instance, according to the data collection of the *Demographic Yearbook* of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, at the global level, statistics on migrant inflows since 2010 are available for only 54 countries⁶ and on outflows for 33 countries.⁷ Statistics on migrant stock since 2010 at the global level are available for only 93 countries.⁸ Data disaggregated by additional characteristics, even so basic as sex and age, are even scarcer.

4. Mindful of this, the Commission has recognized that there is an urgent need for statistical capacity-building and resources to support countries in their efforts to strengthen their statistical systems on migration, as well as a need to provide support to countries in their efforts to enhance access to administrative data, integrate multiple data sources and foster collaboration among relevant stakeholders within countries.

5. Since 2019, the Statistics Division and the Expert Group have devoted efforts to the fulfilment of the requests of the Statistical Commission. The present report provides an overview of those efforts. It describes a global consultation carried out to

¹ See E/CN.3/2019/17.

² General Assembly resolution 73/195, annex.

³ ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/58/Rev.1.

⁴ See Statistical Commission decision 50/117.

⁵ E/CN.3/2019/17.

⁶ Refers to the tabulation of total inflows by reason for admission. Consulted 2 November 2020 at <http://data.un.org/>. Data for the European countries are compiled by Eurostat and are not included in the analysis.

⁷ Refers to the tabulation of total outflows by status at time of departure. Consulted 2 November 2020 at <http://data.un.org/>. Data for the European countries are compiled by Eurostat and are not included in the analysis.

⁸ Refers to the tabulation of total of native and foreign-born population. Consulted 31 October 2020 at <http://data.un.org/>.

assess statistical concepts, definitions and data sources used by countries to measure and monitor international migration, which in turn informed the development of a conceptual framework on statistics on international migration and mobility, and accompanying definitions, presented in the present report as the core and centrepiece of the revision of the *Recommendations, Revision 1*.

6. In addition, the report describes other undertakings, including early work on the development of the framework for topics and indicators that will support the operationalization of the conceptual framework and accompanying definitions, and progress in the preparation of a technical report on the integration of migration data. Other topics discussed in the report are capacity development activities, including the implementation of a Development Account project, the initial development of a global programme to strengthen national statistical systems on migration, early preparations for the third International Forum on Migration Statistics and the plans and future priorities for the Statistics Division and the Expert Group.

II. Global consultation on national practices related to international migration statistics

7. To kick off the revision of the *Recommendations, Revision 1* (which dates from 1998), the Statistics Division conducted a global consultation on behalf of the Expert Group. Chief statisticians were given an online questionnaire to fill in and were asked to liaise with relevant national agencies that were involved in data collection and/or that were responsible for developing migration policies.

8. The aim of the consultation was to gauge national practices and data needs related to international migration. The online questionnaire⁹ was comprehensive in its scope with the ultimate objective of informing the revision of the *Recommendations, Revision 1*. It comprised 130 questions organized in 33 sections.¹⁰ The consultation proceeded from 15 August to 27 September 2019, and responses were received from 103 national agencies (of which 74 were national statistical offices) in 79 countries.

9. The present section is focused on the definitions and data sources used at the country level, based on the responses received from national statistical offices and other national agencies charged with the collection of statistics on international migration.

A. Main findings

10. The Secretariat and the Expert Group have analysed the responses to the global consultation and identified key statistical concepts used to measure international migration and related data sources and data needs.

⁹ The questions contained in the consultation are presented in a background document to be made available together with the present report on the website of the Statistical Commission.

¹⁰ The questionnaire consisted of the following sections: current practice on migration data production; stock of international migrants; flow of international immigration; flow of international emigration; citizens living abroad; return migrants; labour migration; seasonal migration; circular migration; temporary migration; long-term migration; short-term migration; family-related migration (reunification/formation); education-related migration; descendants of migrants; irregular migration; mixed migration; diaspora; forced migration; environment-related migration; cross-border workers; transit migration; migrants' access to services; migrants' situation in relation to other populations; fighting against discrimination and vulnerability of migrants; fair recruitment, decent work and labour rights protection for migrants; regular pathway and irregular migration; migration experience and perception; access to information for migrants; drivers and impact of migration; child-specific migration indicators; gender-sensitive migration indicators; and relevant national agencies other than statistical offices.

11. As regards the measurement of migrant stocks, it is found that the majority of countries that had responded to the consultation produce one or more figures on stocks based on different criteria in order to meet the needs of a wide range of users. While the main criterion for being included is “having foreign citizenship”, followed by “being foreign-born”, a few countries also produce stock figures based on the criteria of “having resided abroad in the past” or “being a foreign citizen who was born abroad”. In the case of flows of immigration and emigration, the main criterion used by countries is “duration of stay”, although practices vary greatly. The cut-off for the duration of stay ranges from 4 to 12 months, sometimes intersecting with other criteria, such as intention to stay or legal permission to stay. Other countries use further criteria, such as 12 out of 16 months or 9 out of 12 months. Often, the definitions applied depend on the data sources used to produce the statistics, even within countries.

12. On the question of statistical capacity, out of all the topics included in the questionnaire, countries seem to be better able to produce statistics on labour migration and long-term migration, given that 45 countries reported that they produced data on the former and 41 on the latter. Those two topics were followed by statistics on return migrants (30 countries). The global consultation also revealed key data gaps and needs, as countries indicated that there were some areas of policy interest for which no statistics were being produced. This was the case for irregular migration and citizens living abroad, for which, respectively, 38 and 37 countries indicated that no data were being collected.

13. Regarding data sources used by countries, responses to the global consultation indicate that the most common source type for migration-related data and indicators are household surveys, such as labour force surveys and surveys on living conditions. This finding is aligned to the relatively large number of countries producing statistics on labour migration. For a few countries, administrative registers are the main source for migration statistics. Administrative data on international migration exist in virtually every country (e.g., work permits, border-crossing registers, population registers, registers of foreign citizens), a fact that points to untapped potential to improve migration data and the production of migration statistics.

14. Finally, countries tend to make efficient use of particular indicators to respond to various policy needs. However, countries also reported that, sometimes, several indicators were produced to address a single policy concern, which may lead to confusion if not properly documented and communicated. Responses to the global consultation showed that the availability of data tends to dictate the formulation of indicators, regardless of their pertinence to specific migration policies.

III. Key elements of the revised conceptual framework and accompanying definitions on international migration and mobility

15. The Statistics Division and the Expert Group developed an updated conceptual framework on international migration and mobility with accompanying definitions in the context of revising the *Recommendations, Revision 1*, of 1998. This work was

spearheaded by the Expert Group's task force on concepts and definitions¹¹ and was done following a highly inclusive and collaborative approach that started with the global consultation described in the previous section and included an in-depth Expert Group meeting and several rounds of feedback.

16. The revised framework is put forward as the core and centrepiece of the revision of the *Recommendations, Revision 1*. Thus, all other elements of the revision will be built on the revised conceptual framework and accompanying definitions, should it be endorsed by the Commission.

17. The aim of the revised conceptual framework and related definitions¹² contained in the present report is to provide practical and updated recommendations by focusing on: (a) building stronger links with data needs for policymaking; (b) revisiting the concept and definition of what constitutes an international migrant and related phenomena; (c) covering new migration patterns and new data sources; (d) incorporating relevant frameworks, such as the 2018 International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics¹³ and the ILO guidelines concerning statistics of international labour migration;¹⁴ and (e) providing guidance on data collection and analyses.

18. The complete report of the task force on concepts and definitions, which contains the revised conceptual framework, will be made available on the website of the Statistical Commission as a background document, while key elements of the methodological development are included below. The background document also includes a comparative table,¹⁵ which summarizes the main differences between the proposed revised conceptual framework and that contained in the *Recommendations, Revision 1*, of 1998.

A. Stronger links with data needs for policymaking

19. While it is acknowledged that identifying concepts and definitions that would be applicable to all countries is challenging, the aim pursued with the proposal is to find the right balance between relevance to national policymaking and the promotion of international comparability across countries. Harmonization across different international statistical frameworks, covering both the demographic domain and other areas for which the concepts of population and migration are relevant (such as System of National Accounts, labour force, balance of payment and tourism) is also promoted.

20. The proposal is aimed at addressing data needs for responding to key policy interests, in line with the 2030 Agenda and at building on the initial work carried out

¹¹ The task force is co-chaired by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the Australian National University, and is composed of Hungary, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as by Bristol University, the Université Catholique de Louvain, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

¹² The definitions accompanying the revised conceptual framework are presented in annex I.

¹³ The International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics were developed by the Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics and were published in 2018 by the European Union and the United Nations. Available at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Principles_and_Recommendations/International-Migration/2018_1746_EN_08-E.pdf.

¹⁴ International Labour Organization document ICLS/20/2018/Guidelines. Available at https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_648922.pdf.

¹⁵ See annex II.

by the Expert Group's task force on developing a framework of core and additional topics and indicators on international migration,¹⁶ and on the results of the global consultation.

21. This approach of being responsive to policy data needs is present in all components of the revised conceptual framework, from the conceptualization of international migration and mobility to the alignment of flows with a country's measurement of the resident population, which forms the basis for more accurate population estimates and projections. Producing population estimates and making projections are two of the most important activities of national statistical offices and forms the basis of policymaking and planning.

B. Distinction between international migration and mobility

22. Conceptual frameworks on international migration and mobility are put forward and a clear distinction between them is made. International mobility includes all movements that cross international borders within a given year. International migration is defined more narrowly as a change in country of residence and is considered a subset of international mobility.

23. In the revised conceptual framework, populations and their corresponding international mobility are split into two distinct groups: (a) the resident population and international migration and (b) temporary (non-resident) population and international temporary mobility. International temporary mobility includes all international border crossing events, except those related to changes in the resident population.¹⁷ Migration should be considered a change in the resident population. Residence should be defined in line with the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 3*.¹⁸

24. Temporary population movements are, arguably, as important to measure as international migration and may influence the economic and social setting of a country to the same considerable extent. All temporary population movements are considered, including, for example, those associated with daily commuting, tourism, pilgrimage, business, health care, visits to family or friends, seasonal labour and education. Temporary populations include forcibly displaced persons who stay in the country of measurement for less than the minimum duration required in order to be considered part of the resident population, such as asylum seekers in transit, refugees who move to another country or return, and environment or climate related mobility.

25. For the compilation of statistics on international migration and temporary mobility, two types of populations are needed: a resident population and a temporary population. Figure 1 shows how international migration and temporary population mobility are linked to the processes of population change. The resident population consists of individuals who have lived in the country of measurement for either (a) most of the preceding 12 months (or intend to, or have permission to live in that

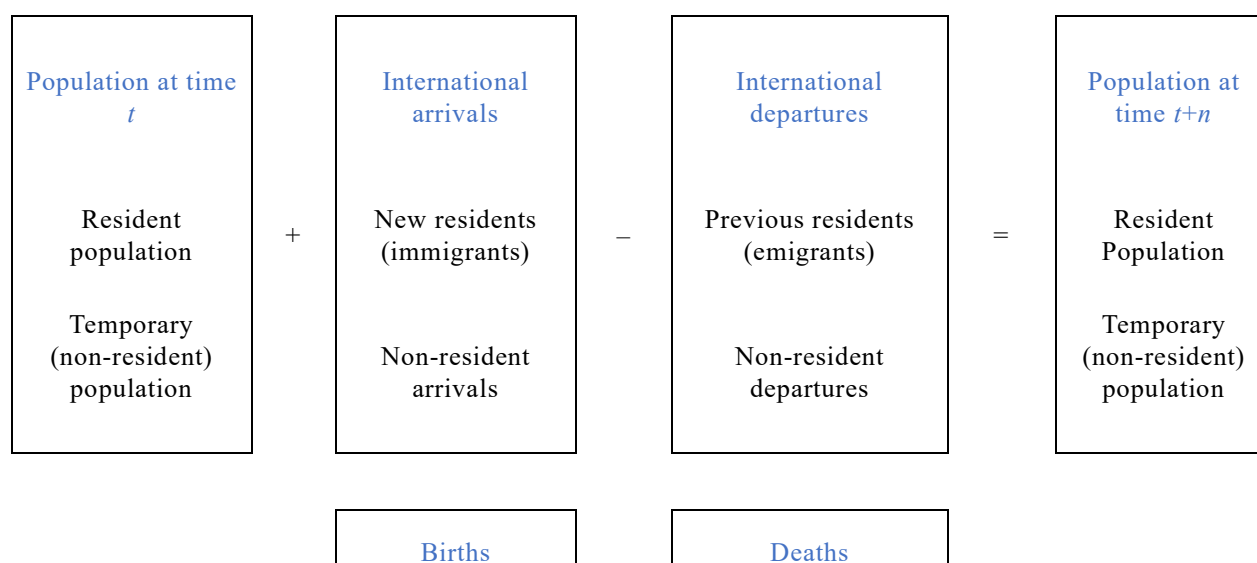
¹⁶ The task force is co-chaired by OECD, Morocco and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and composed of Canada, Georgia, Ghana, Mexico, the Republic of Moldova, South Africa, Sweden, the United States of America, the African Union, Eurostat, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Population Division, UNHCR, the Statistics Division, the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys, the World Health Organization, the International Organization for Migration, Australian National University, Bristol University, Colgate University and Lomonosov Moscow State University.

¹⁷ See also Elin Charles-Edwards and others, "A framework for official temporary population statistics", *Journal of Official Statistics*, vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 1–24.

¹⁸ United Nations publication, 2017. Available at: https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/seriesM/Series_M67Rev3en.pdf.

country for at least six months and one day) or (b) at least the preceding 12 months (or intend to, or have been permission to live in that country for at least 12 months), not including temporary absences for holidays or work assignments (in line with *Principles and Recommendations, Revision 3*). The term “temporary population” refers to all persons present in the country at a specific point in time who are not residents.

Figure I
Overarching conceptual framework on international mobility



26. As mentioned earlier, the revised conceptual framework makes a distinction between international migration and international temporary mobility. Producing comparable statistics on both international migration and temporary movements is likely to be difficult and complex for any country, but is particularly so for those without access to individual data on all border crossings. Nonetheless, some guiding frameworks are provided on the durations and types of movements that are needed for understanding international migration and temporary mobility.

C. Alignment of migration flows with resident population change

27. The proposed conceptual frameworks address several important problems related to the measurement of international migration, among them the current misalignment between flows of international migration and stocks of immigrant populations. Migration flows generally include all persons immigrating or emigrating to or from a country. Immigrant populations are measured primarily using information on country of birth, without reference to the duration of stay and excluding those who have migrated previously but returned to their country of birth. Without this alignment, there are critical gaps in the evidence base for national policymakers.

28. One of the main contributions of the revised conceptual framework in relation to the earlier recommendations¹⁹ is the emphasis on consistency between international migration flows and immigrant populations (stocks), and international temporary mobility and temporary populations (see annex I for definitions). Aligning the measurement of flows and stocks should improve accuracy and accountability in

¹⁹ *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1.*

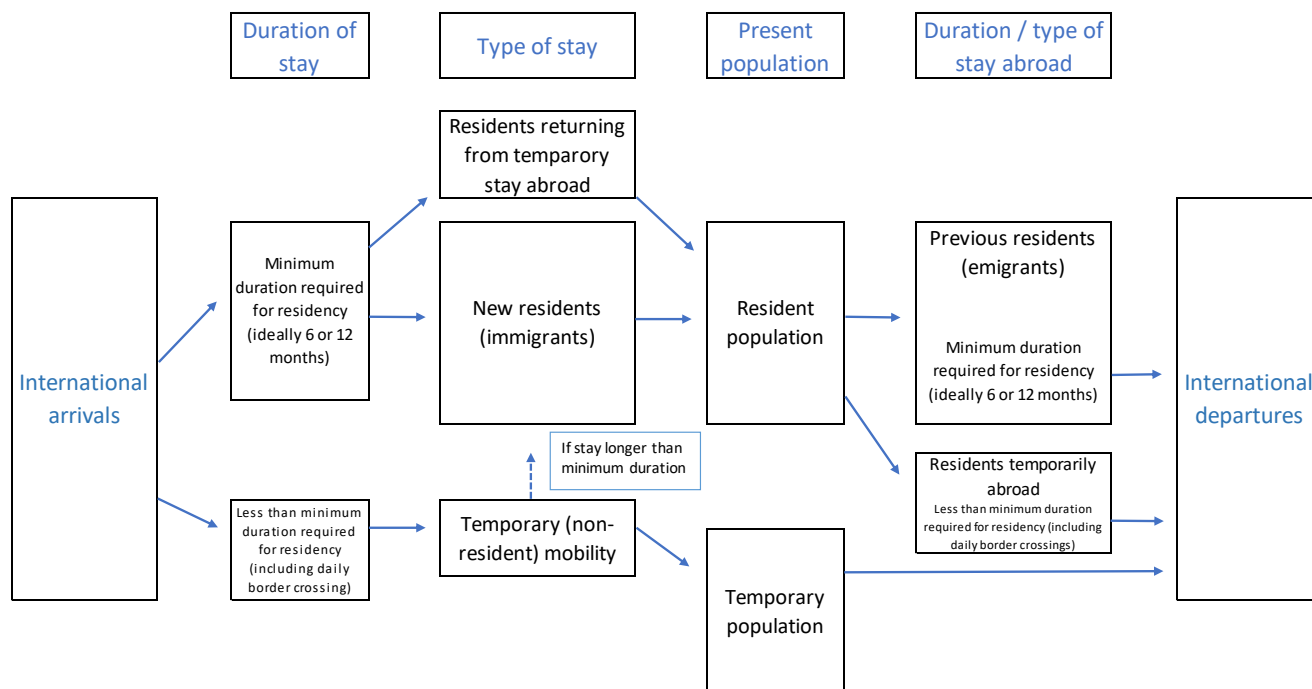
international migration data, as flows are integral to understanding changes in the resident population, which is the main population used for international comparison.

29. The frameworks should be considered important starting points for more detailed and policy relevant information on international migration and mobility. All of the concepts described can be further disaggregated by age, sex, citizenship, country of birth and other attributes, such as education levels or occupations.

30. Countries currently apply different concepts of “resident population”; regardless of the concept used, within a country’s statistical system, what is important for improving the availability and quality of international migration data and statistics at the national level is that the flows are aligned with the country’s measurement of the resident population. This ensures consistency in the production of national statistics, particularly since migration is a key component of population change and data on it are necessary for the production of population estimates and projections. To facilitate the adoption of international concepts and definitions by countries and thereby promote international data comparability, the conceptual frameworks includes a proposal for alignment with related international statistical standards, including the *Principles and Recommendations, Revision 3*. When reporting for international monitoring, countries will be asked to document potential deviations from these standards in their data and metadata submissions.

31. Figure II depicts the links between international arrivals and present population, which includes all persons present in the country of measurement at a particular time, excluding residents temporarily abroad. The key distinguishing factor between international migration and other international population movements is duration of stay in the country or abroad. The criterion for defining a migrant, therefore, should be the duration required in order to be considered part of the resident population. In practice, as recommended in the proposed conceptual framework, this would imply a duration of either 6 months or 12 months so that flows of migration coincide with changes in the resident population during a given year. The same situation occurs for departures: persons need to be away and stay in another country long enough based on a minimum residence requirement to be considered part of another country’s resident population. Persons who stayed temporarily in more than one country for less than the minimum duration criteria cannot establish a new residence, therefore are still part of the resident population of their country of origin. The overarching framework depicted in figure II includes individuals who never become part of the resident population. It also includes changes in status from temporary population to resident population for persons who stay longer than the minimum duration while they are present in the country. Persons who stay longer than the minimum duration and do not possess a valid visa or other immigration documentation should be considered part of the resident population for statistical purposes.

Figure II
Conceptual framework on intersection between duration of stay and international mobility



D. Reconciliation of foreign-born and native-born populations, and foreign citizens and national citizens, and their international migration flows

32. For the resident population, four subpopulations are critical to understanding immigrant and emigrant populations: native-born citizens, native-born foreign citizens, foreign-born citizens and foreign-born foreign citizens. Foreign-born/native-born and foreign citizens/national citizens are the two main types of immigrant and emigrant populations for which data are available. Arguably, by themselves, neither is ideal for measuring migrant populations. However, combining these two criteria into one framework provides a powerful tool for understanding international migration and its consequences for demographic and social change over time.

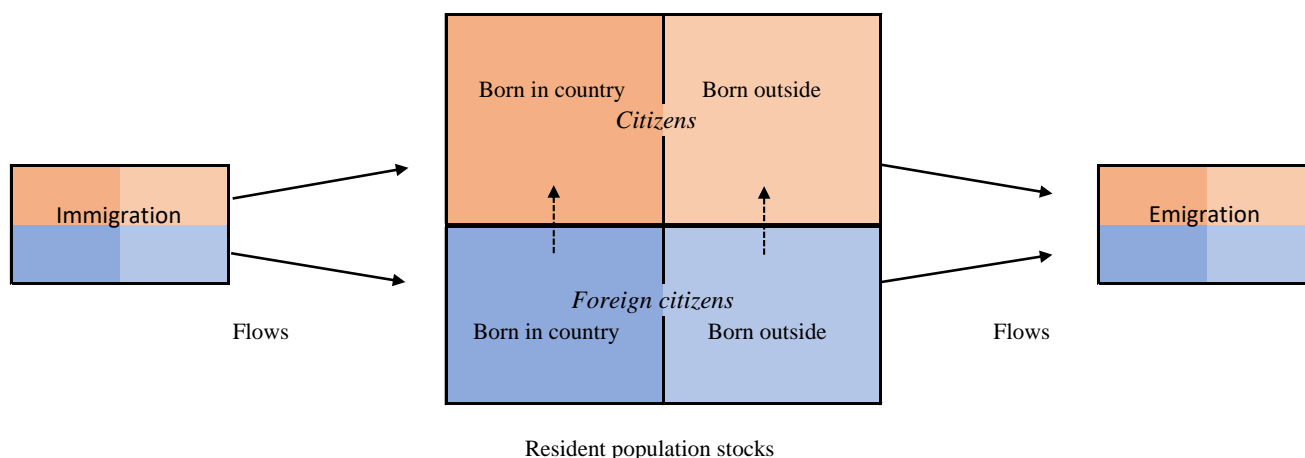
33. The advantage of birthplace in defining the migrant population is its consistent definition over time, that is, a person can be born in only one country and cannot change his or her country of birth (but can change his or her country of citizenship). In addition, if a person's country of birth is different from his or her country of residence, it shows that the person moved to another country at least once in his or her life. However, on the basis of those data it is not known when the migrants arrived or whether they have permission to remain indefinitely. Citizenship, on the other hand, distinguishes access to a range of services and protections in a given country. For immigrants, obtaining citizenship is arguably one of the most important indicators for societal integration and permanency. However, in relation to citizenship data, once a person becomes a citizen, the previous or other country of citizenship is no longer considered important information or is no longer recorded. Also, persons can become citizens even though they have never lived in the country of measurement (e.g., children of citizens living abroad). Alternatively, persons may be born in that country but remain foreign citizens. For instance, many refugees are born in

displacement and have never migrated during their lifetimes. Such persons would be included in the native-born foreign citizen population group, unless they naturalized. Another important indicator is return migration of native-born citizens who previously resided in another country.

34. Figure III represents the ideal and recommended situation, in which the resident population is disaggregated by both birthplace and by citizenship, together with corresponding flows of immigration and emigration. This conceptual framework is used as a basis for recommending data collection and dissemination on international migration and migrant populations. As above, the framework indicates coherence between flows and stocks. Changes in the size and structure of the stock of migrants are determined by the flows. The framework also provides for changes in status from foreign citizen to national citizen. Citizenship can be acquired at birth or by naturalization, whether by declaration, marriage or other means as provided for by national law, and can be lost by revocation or renunciation.

Figure III

Conceptual framework on international migration and the coherence between flows and stocks



35. Population accounting tables are also put forward as a tool to highlight the data that would need to be gathered to reconcile foreign-born and native-born populations, and foreign citizens and national citizens, and their international migration flows. This accounting approach is aimed at improving accuracy.

E. Conceptualization of international temporary mobility and linkages with temporary (non-resident) populations

36. Measuring temporary mobility and creating categories that are meaningful for policy is fraught with many challenges. Censuses are generally not good sources of data on temporary movements as they are conducted only every 5 or 10 years and take place at a specific point in the year, which may not be reflective of the movements occurring over a period of time (e.g., a year). Administrative records are often better suited for measuring temporary movements, as they can be used to track events over time. However, they are often designed only for particular types of populations, such as tourists, seasonal workers or business travellers (based on, for example, visas), or particular types of movements. Nonetheless, there is an interest in and, therefore, a need for data on in measuring many types of international mobility that do not result in a change of country of residence.

37. As with international migration, there is a wide range of reasons for crossing international borders for short durations. One important distinction between international migration and international temporary population mobility is that, as shown in figure III, the assumption is that the immigrant population accumulates over time. For the temporary population it is the opposite, as it may fluctuate over time (both seasonally and annually). Also, the flows are likely to be much larger than the temporary population at any given time. That is, the number of persons recorded as staying temporarily in a country during a period of time (e.g., a year) will likely be much larger than the temporary population recorded at a point in time. Also, as shown in figure II, some members of temporary populations may become residents.

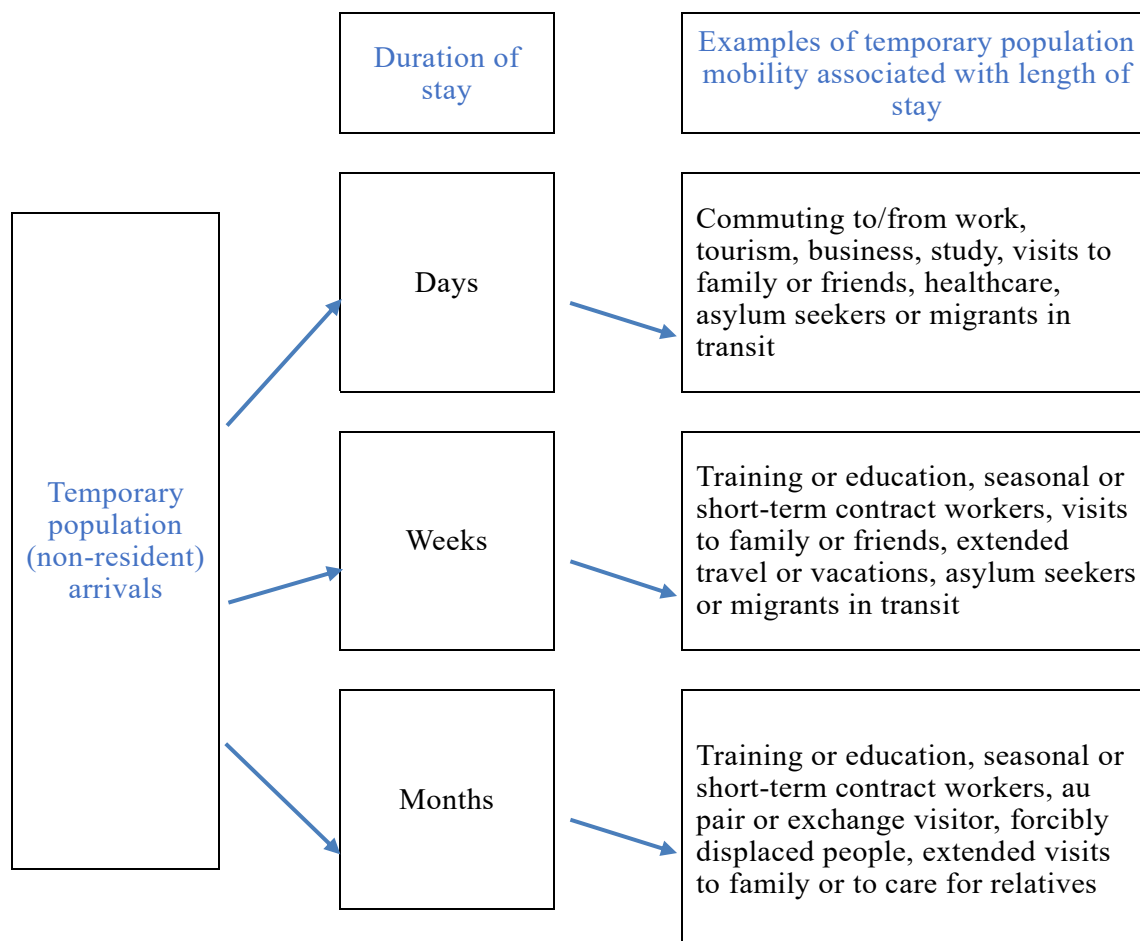
38. Within temporary populations, there are two main types to consider. The first is circular movements involving the same persons repeatedly crossing the same international borders during a particular year. This includes persons who commute daily or monthly for reasons related to work or study, or persons who have second homes or family in another country. The second is temporary stays that occur only once a year. This includes tourists, business travellers, short-term contract workers and seasonal agricultural workers. In both cases, it is important to capture not only the events of the movements, but also the durations of stay and purposes of the movements.

39. It is recommended under the revised conceptual framework to use the “service population” framework²⁰ for producing statistics, according to which populations and flows would be measured by visa category and/or average time spent in the country of measurement (person-day concept). By capturing both the numbers of persons and the average time they spend in the country of measurement by various categories of temporary population movements, one could assess the relative impacts of the moves for subpopulations, education sectors and employment sectors, and local economies could be assessed. The international mobility framework presented covers all types of temporary mobility, with an emphasis on movements associated with: (a) foreign citizens in the labour market; (b) foreign citizens utilizing education or training services; (c) foreign citizens seeking health care or medical care services; and (d) foreign citizens seeking asylum or protection as refugees.

40. Figure IV depicts the relationship between the duration of stay and examples of different types of international temporary population mobility. The list of the types of international mobility is not exhaustive.

²⁰ The term “service population” refers to the population that provides or uses services in a country other than the country of residence. For more information about the service population, see page 180 of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 3* (United Nations publication, 2017).

Figure IV
Examples of temporary population mobility associated with length of stay



41. In figure IV, a distinction is made between very short stays measured in days and longer stays measured in weeks or months. The types and relative importance of temporary mobility vary from one country to another. From the point of view of collecting data on these movements, it is important to consider the reasons for travel and the durations of stay (such as for the service population). Together, those data can be used to understand the connections that temporary movements have with the temporary present population at different times and with the economy or the society at large.

IV. Other work of the Statistics Division and the Expert Group on Migration Statistics

42. The Expert Group on Migration Statistics has met in plenary twice since last reporting to the Commission, from 1 to 3 July 2019 and from 4 to 9 June 2020.²¹ In

²¹ The report and conclusions of the Expert Group meetings are available, together with all other documentation of the Expert Group, at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/migration-expert-group/>.

addition, the task forces working under the Expert Group have met numerous times to advance their programmes of work.

43. The Statistics Division has provided substantive and secretariat support to all activities of the Expert Group and has continued to implement the work programme of the Statistics Division on migration statistics. Salient elements are illustrated below.

A. Data

44. Early work has begun to develop a set of core and additional topics and indicators on international migration and mobility. The work is informed by the results of the global consultation conducted in 2019 and builds on the revised conceptual framework, with clear linkages to potential data sources. The work will intensify in 2021. Together with the conceptual framework, the data and indicator framework will make up the bulk of the revision of the *Recommendations*.

45. In addition, the Expert Group is working on a technical report to support countries in producing disaggregated data on international migration using micro- and macrodata techniques, with the aim of incorporating that information into the revision of the *Recommendations*. The report will include, among other topics, a definition of data integration, an explanation of why both micro- and macrodata integration are needed to improve the measurement of international migration statistics, and examples of the use of micro- and macrodata integration in official statistics. Macrodata integration methods and examples will be discussed, followed by microdata integration, including its legal, policy and technical prerequisites. Finally, assessing and communicating results will be addressed, highlighting major challenges and opportunities in mainstreaming the use of integrated data in official statistics.

B. Capacity development

46. The Statistics Division is implementing a capacity development project to improve the collection and use of international migration data in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact for Migration. In particular, the project, which will continue until December 2021, is aimed at strengthening national capacity in producing internationally comparable basic migration data, as well as socioeconomic statistics disaggregated by migratory status, for monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The project, carried out in partnership with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, is also aimed at enhancing understanding of the uses and limitations of migration data for policy purposes and improving the availability of data for basic migration statistics and statistics on trafficking in persons.

47. Activities for the capacity development project kicked off in 2018, as previously reported to the Commission.²² They progressed well during 2019 and were modified during 2020, given the ongoing pandemic. In period 2019–2020, four more needs assessment were carried out (Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Thailand); a standard set of migration questions to be included in national censuses and surveys was developed; two regional workshops were carried out in Asia with a focus on the use of non-traditional data sources; one technical meeting on improving migration statistics was held; and country consultations were ongoing to undertake multiple systems

²² See [E/CN.3/2019/28](#).

estimation (MSE) studies in order to estimate the number of victims of trafficking in persons (Argentina, Colombia and Peru in Latin America, and Malaysia in Asia).

48. In the early stages of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, activities for the project were brought to a halt. It has since forged ahead with selected activities. In particular, Mexico expressed an interest in conducting the needs assessment remotely in a series of online meetings and asynchronous activities. Given the impossibility of travel, progress was focused on the production of technical materials. For instance, the assessment toolkit was translated into Spanish and was improved thanks to feedback received from participating countries, expanding it with sections on the impacts of the pandemic on migration data and statistics, and on the use of geospatial tools, among other topics. Moreover, the toolkit is being used to ascertain the availability of migration data in the Latin American and Caribbean region in order to have an overall picture of statistical capacity.

49. The Expert Group has started to review existing global statistical programmes with the aim of designing and proposing a global programme on migration statistics that will strengthen the systems of collection, management, compilation and use of migration statistics in a holistic manner. Information has been collected on capacity-building initiatives on migration statistics carried out by regional and international organizations and the mapping of the core elements of those initiatives has been started. Also, institutional frameworks for producing and disseminating migration statistics in selected countries are being reviewed with a view to identifying a model data-sharing mechanism at the national level. This work will continue during 2021.

C. International Forum on Migration Statistics

50. The Statistics Division contributed to the organization of the second International Forum on Migration Statistics, held in Cairo from 19 to 21 January 2020, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the United Nations Population Division. Like the International Forum held in 2018, the 2020 International Forum provided a platform for sharing innovative approaches to filling data gaps in the measurement of migration and migration-related topics, such as local integration and development impacts. Given that migrants often face limited access to health care, education, justice, labour protections and other services, the 2020 International Forum specifically addressed disaggregation of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets by migratory status. It was attended by more than 700 participants from 99 countries, who formed a diverse group of stakeholders. There were six plenary and 50 parallel sessions involving experts and organizational leaders in the area of migration data and statistics. All documentation is available at the website of the International Forum.²³

51. Preparations for the third International Forum on Migration Statistics have kicked off with partner agencies (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Organization for Migration and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development). The aim is to hold the forum in May 2022.

V. Plans and priorities

52. The Statistics Division and the Expert Group will focus their efforts on developing the set of recommended core and additional topics and indicators and reviewing data sources related to international migration and mobility, building on

²³ www.iom.int/ifms/.

the revised conceptual framework. The Division will endeavour to review and revise the questionnaires on international migration used in the *Demographic Yearbook* data collection in line with the revised conceptual framework once a framework of core and additional topics and indicators has been agreed.

53. In addition, the Expert Group will finalize the technical report on data integration through micro- and macrodata techniques. The Expert Group is also planning to compile examples of best practices in and recommendations on the collection, analysis and dissemination of international migration statistics for countries currently producing (or planning to produce) such statistics.

54. As part of the work to design a global programme on migration statistics, the Expert Group will review existing financial support mechanisms for statistical activities that would assist in the calculation of cost estimates of the global programme. A first draft of the global programme is planned to be prepared by mid-2021.

55. The Division will continue with the implementation of the capacity development project, which, inter alia, will produce a range of technical and e-learning materials based on a mix of methodological guidance and practical advice, to be used in future training activities. Regional and national workshops, which have merely been postponed for the time being, will have to be cancelled or conducted remotely if travel restrictions continue. This may seriously limit participation by developing countries with weak information technology infrastructures.

56. The Statistics Division, together with the Population Division, will spearhead preparations for the third International Forum on Migration Statistics, in collaboration with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the International Organization for Migration.

VI. Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission

57. **The Commission is invited:**

(a) **To take note of the work carried out by the Statistics Division and the Expert Group on Migration Statistics on the improvement of migration statistics;**

(b) **Endorse the revised conceptual framework on international migration and mobility and accompanying definitions as the core elements for the upcoming revision of the *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration*;**

(c) **Provide guidance on the plans and priorities of the Statistics Division and the Expert Group on Migration Statistics, in particular regarding the development of a set of recommended topics and indicators on international migration and mobility in line with the indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Compact for Migration.**

Annex I

Definitions accompanying the revised conceptual framework on international migration and mobility

Population bases for the production of statistics on international migration and mobility

Resident population refers to all persons who either (a) have lived in the country of measurement for most of the past 12 months or intend to stay (or have permission to stay) for at least 6 months; or (b) have lived in the country of measurement for at least 12 months within a given year or intend to stay (or have permission to stay) in the country of measurement for at least 12 months, not including temporary absences for holidays or work assignments (see *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 3*, United Nations publication, 2017).

Present population refers to all persons present in the country of measurement at a specific reference moment (census reference moment); present population includes residents who are present in that country but excludes residents who were not present at the reference moment (see *ibid.*).

Temporary (non-resident) population refers to all persons present in the country of measurement who are staying, intend to stay or have permission to stay for less than the minimum duration required to be considered residents in a particular year.

International mobility and migration

International mobility refers to all movements that cross international borders within a given year.

International migration refers to all movements resulting in a change in country of residence within a given year. International migration is a subset of international mobility.

International migrant refers to a person who has changed his or her country of residence by establishing a new residence in another country within a given year and thereby becoming a member of the resident population (see definition above). An international migrant can be either an immigrant or an emigrant and can hold national or foreign citizenship, or be stateless.

Immigration (flow) refers to all persons entering the country of measurement and becoming part of the resident population within a given year, regardless of whether they hold national or foreign citizenship or are stateless.

Emigration (flow) refers to all persons leaving the country of measurement to become a part of another country's resident population (see definition above) within a given year, regardless of whether they hold national or foreign citizenship or are stateless.

Returning citizens (flow) refers to all national citizens who have previously resided in another country and become residents of the country of citizenship in a given year.

Returning native-born population (flow) refers to all native-born persons who have previously resided in another country and become residents of their country of birth in a given year.

Foreign-born population (stock) refers to all persons who reside in the country of measurement at a given time and were born in another country.

Native-born population (stock) refers to all persons who reside in the country of measurement at a given time and were born in that country.

Foreign citizen population (stock) refers to all persons who reside in the country of measurement at a given time and do not hold citizenship of that country.

National citizen population (stock) refers to all persons who reside in the country of measurement at a given time and hold citizenship of that country.

Immigrant population (stock) refers to all persons who reside in the country of measurement at a given time and were born in another country, or hold citizenship of another country, or are stateless. Persons who were born in the country and hold the country's citizenship are therefore not considered part of the immigrant population, but may be considered part of the immigration flow (see definition above) if they returned and changed their country of residence within a given year.

Emigrant population (stock) refers to all national citizens or persons who were born in the country of measurement and are residing in another country at a given time.

Returned migrants (stock) refers to all persons who have previously resided in the country of measurement and have emigrated and subsequently come back to live in that country and stayed or intended to stay for the minimum duration required to be considered residents.

Returned native-born migrants (stock) refers to native-born persons who have previously resided in the country of measurement, have emigrated and subsequently come back to live in that country and stayed or intended to stay for the minimum duration required to be considered residents.

Temporary population mobility

International temporary mobility refers to all movements across international borders by persons without a related change in their country of residence.

Cross-border workers refers to all persons who are not residents of the country of measurement but have been engaged in economic activities in that country repeatedly, provided that they depart from the country at regular and short intervals (daily or weekly) (see International Labour Organization, "Guidelines concerning statistics of international labour migration", 2018).

Seasonal workers refers to all persons who are not residents of the country of their employment, whose work, by its character, is dependent on seasonal conditions and is performed during part of the year (see *ibid.*).

Other types of temporary workers refers to all persons who are not residents of the country of measurement but travel to that country for short periods (less than the minimum duration required to be considered residents) for work-related reasons, such as itinerant workers and project-tied workers (for detailed categories of workers included in this group, see *ibid.*).

Training-related mobility refers to movements by all persons who are not residents of the country of measurement but travel to that country to attend a short-term training programme for less than the minimum duration required to be considered residents.

Health-related mobility refers to movements by all persons who are not residents of the country of measurement but travel to that country to access health-care services with or without a written agreement with a health-care facility.

Asylum seekers in transit refers to persons who travel to the country of measurement in transit with the intention to travel to another country to file an application for asylum.

Circular movement refers to movements by persons who are not residents of the country of measurement and who travel to the same country more than once during a particular year (see Economic Commission for Europe, *Defining and Measuring Circular Migration*, 2016).

Annex II

Main differences between the proposed revised conceptual framework and the 1998 *Recommendations on International Migration*

	<i>1998 Recommendations</i>	<i>Proposed revised recommendations</i>
Definition of “usual residence”	<p>“Country of usual residence” is defined as the country in which a person lives, that is to say, the country in which he or she has a place to live where he or she normally spends the daily period of rest.</p>	<p>“Country of residence” is defined based on duration-of-stay criteria as recommended in the <i>Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 3</i>, using one of the following criteria:</p> <p>(a) The place at which the person has lived continuously for most of the preceding 12 months (that is, for at least 6 months and one day), not including temporary absences for holiday or work assignments, or intends to live for at least 6 months and a day;</p> <p>(b) The place at which the person has lived continuously for at least the preceding 12 months, not including temporary absences for holiday or work assignments, or intends to live for at least 12 months.</p>
Definition of “international migrants”	<p>Two types of migrant are defined:</p> <p>(a) Long-term migrant – a person who moves to his/her usual residence for a period of at least 12 months</p> <p>(b) Short-term migrant – a person who moves to his/her usual residence for at least 3 months but less than 12 months, except for holiday, visits, business, and so on.</p>	<p>An international migrant is defined as a person who has changed her/his country of residence and established a new residence in another country.</p>
Distinguishing international migration from other types of mobility	<p>Temporary population mobility is not included.</p>	<p>In the proposed framework, a clear distinction is made between international migration and other, related, international temporary mobility, which includes all international border crossings, except those related to changes in the resident population. Temporary population movements are considered to be as important to measure, as they may greatly</p>

	1998 Recommendations	Proposed revised recommendations
Alignment of the measurement of resident populations with the measurement of international migration flows	Misalignment occurs when a country does not use the same duration criteria (12 months) for measuring the usual resident population and international migration flows.	influence the economic and social setting of a country. The proposed recommendations include an alignment of the measurement of resident populations with measurement of international migration flows within a country's statistical system. This implies that the same criteria should be used for measuring resident populations and international migration flows. It ensures consistency in the production of national statistics, particularly since migration is a key component of population change and data on it are necessary for the production of population estimates and projections.
The coherence between international migration (flows) and immigrant population (stocks)	There is no recommendation.	In the revised recommendations, the importance is emphasized of achieving coherence between international migration (flows) and immigrant populations (stocks) by reconciling the demographic components of change for the following key subpopulations: native-born citizens, foreign-born citizens, native-born foreign citizens, foreign-born foreign citizens.
Base populations for purposes of measuring migration and temporary mobility	The base population is the usual resident population of, respectively, long-term and short-term migrants. "Long-term migrants" are defined as those whose duration of stay is at least 12 months, "short-term migrants" as those whose duration of stay is less than 12 months and more than 3 months.	Base populations include: (a) Resident population, to measure international migration (b) Temporary (non-resident) population, to measure temporary population mobility