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RAPPORTEUR REPORT ON MIGRATION STATISTICS

Prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau,
in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Member states should be able to produce reliable, internationally comparable and timely migration statistics according to international standards, thereby facilitating national policy-making and internationally comparative analysis. In order to achieve this goal the issue of data quality improvement (in the area of migration statistics) should be considered as the starting point. The progress made collectively by national and international organizations and the issues/problems that they face (collectively and individually) can be summarized under three broad areas of interest: 1. A conceptual framework for migration statistics; 2. Improving migration data to coincide with the 2010 census round; and 3. Formal and informal collaborative efforts among national and international organizations working on migration statistics.

2. This report is a summary of key activities and associated issues in the area of international migration statistics. Additionally, other important developments in this area are included here to be brought to the attention of the Conference.

PROGRESS BEING MADE COLLECTIVELY BY ORGANIZATIONS ON MIGRATION STATISTICS (WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE DOING TO ADDRESS THE OVERALL ISSUE OF MIGRATION DATA QUALITY)

3. Since the United Nations' 1998 Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, numerous activities including the production of reports, fact sheets, databases, and research into improved and new methods of estimating migration have been undertaken and completed by national and international bodies. However, many of the recommendations have not been uniformly or completely implemented worldwide. In fact, implementation has been carried out in a more decentralized fashion, usually at the country and regional levels with the establishment of regular working groups and task forces to assess their progress toward complete implementation of the international recommendations.

4. Due to growing interest in the movement of people across borders as part of the broader discussions concerning the movement of goods and services internationally, there is a substantial need to formulate a conceptual framework wherein demographic and economic migration statistics are logically structured. Statistics within this framework would include, but are not restricted to: migratory flows and foreign population stocks, and physical (individual) and financial movements across international borders.

5. Progress has been made in the improvement of data quality in the current demographic framework for migration statistics through the activities of several international organizations and national statistical offices (NSOs). In terms of the collection and dissemination of consistent migration data, such improvements have included:

- collection and dissemination of comparable cross-country stock and flow data to assist in improving the methods of measuring international migration (Council of Europe, Eurostat, International Labour Office (ILO), NSOs, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD));
- publication of annual data on humanitarian migration (Eurostat, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR));
- creation of Migration Section in UN Population Division maintaining data on migration stock (United Nations Population Division (UNPD)); and
- release of statistics on enforcement measures against illegal migration (Eurostat).

6. Progress has been made in the improvement of data quality in the current economic framework for migration statistics through the activities of several international organizations. Such improvements have included:

- continuation of revisions and methodological developments aimed at establishing conceptual consistency between the flows and stocks of migrants on one side and economic flows on the other. In particular, the Technical Subgroup on the Movement of Natural Persons - Mode 4 (Mode 4 Group), chaired by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and reporting to the United Nations Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services, supports the coordination of definitions relating to economic and demographic statistics. These groups report in turn to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics (BOPCOM) and the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA). Relevant suggestions

are included in public documents related to the review of the Balance of Payments Manual (for example, Annotated Outline, p. 53). The particular link between demographic and economic statistics lies in the development of supplemental definitions of residence which will be important for the identification of migrants in resident populations (IMF);

- establishment of a steering committee, chaired by the World Bank's Chief Economist, to exchange information on Bank activities on international migration. A study will examine the impact of migration on developing and developed countries, as well as migrants. Six other research topics have been selected for their importance to development, and the dearth of data and analysis on them. These are remittances; the brain drain; temporary movement of persons; the links between trade, FDI (foreign direct investment) and migration; labor market and social protection issues; and governance; in order to identify policies, regulations and institutional reforms that would improve the development impact of migration (World Bank);
- leading a working group on improving statistics on remittances, at the request of the G7. This will be coordinated with other efforts of the international community, including the Inter-Agency Remittances Task Force, the IMF BOP Committee, and the UN Technical Subgroup of the Task Force on International Trade in Services on the Movement of Natural Persons - particularly the work being done there on a statistical framework for Mode 4. The World Bank and the IMF are organizing a joint technical meeting on remittance statistics in January which will help to refine the work program of the working group; the current expectation is that it will focus on the definition/classification of remittances, guidance on the collection and estimation of remittance data, and the estimation of sources and destinations of inflows and outflows (World Bank); and
- participation in the expected review and possible extension of the UN Recommendations to cover migrant workers and Mode 4 (the presence of natural persons) under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) (ILO).

7. Completing projects in time for the 2010 round of censuses is a relatively universal and useful milestone for international organizations and NSOs that collect, analyze, disseminate, or archive data on migration.

- As a part of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, UNSD conducted the United Nations Expert Group Meeting to Review Critical Issues Relevant to the Planning of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses in New York from 15-17 September 2004. This Expert Group set priorities of work as well as concrete outputs for the development of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses including the revision and updating of the United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Rev. 1 (UNSD);
- Within this Work Programme, three working groups and six technical subgroups will review and update the current Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses. The Technical Subgroup on Internal and International Migration Statistics is established as one of the subgroups of the Working Group on Standards and Frameworks and a Core Set of Outputs. The objective of this technical subgroup is to provide input for updating and revising sections on internal and international migration characteristics in the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Rev. 1 (UNSD); and
- In its work, the Technical Subgroup on Internal and International Migration Statistics will focus on emerging issues, core topics, concepts, definitions and classifications, as well as

stakeholder needs and tabulations. Proposals will be carried to the Expert Group Meeting, 22-26 August 2005 in New York for further discussion and review, as part of the Work Programme for 2005. Ultimately the whole set of draft recommendations will be taken to the Statistical Commission for approval (UNSD).

8. Within the current demographic framework for migration statistics, recommendations have been made to improve the collection of migration data.

- Research has begun on new methods for population censuses to explore recommendations into the structuring of the 2010 census round and national survey collection of migration and ethno-cultural data, including the review and expansion of migration core topics (Eurostat, NSOs, UNECE).
- Seminars continue to be held that explore the status of ongoing testing of the UN Demographic Yearbook questionnaire for collecting data on international migration and harmonizing it with the existing regional data collections (UNSD).

9. Within the current economic framework for migration statistics, recommendations have been made to improve the collection of migration data.

- Key methodological decisions for the current reviews of the Balance of Payments Manual and the System of National Accounts, which are closely linked, are expected to be completed by mid-2006 (IMF).

10. International organizations should continue to work with NSOs on the implementation (application) of UN recommendations in the area of international migration statistics.

Furthermore, discussions and activities on international migration should include the involvement, where reasonable, of both international organizations and NSOs. Cooperation within the demographic framework for migration statistics has been successful across international organizations and within regional working groups. In terms of the collection and dissemination of consistent migration data, such activities have included:

- in-depth studies conducted by 4 to 5 interested countries on their experiences in implementing the current set of UN recommendations on international migration statistics in censuses and other data sources (ECE and Eurostat);
- provision of guidance and technical assistance to countries in transition, countries in the Mediterranean region, and other countries interested in putting in place statistical systems for measuring immigration and emigration flows (ECE and Eurostat);
- annual collection of statistics on international migration flows and foreign populations (joint data collection of Eurostat, ECE, UNSD, Council of Europe and ILO);
- collection, processing, analysis, and publication of demographic, social, economic, and housing statistics using a list of indicators agreed upon with NSOs in select countries (Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT), Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática de México (INEGI), Statistics Canada, U.S. Census Bureau); and
- documentation of permit systems in OECD countries involving the collection of information such as: residence permits, their duration, possibilities for work, and categories of persons covered. There are implicit links to the UN flows framework, at least for those flows that are subject to national regulation (OECD).

11. In terms of the progress made within the demographic framework on devising consistent methodological approaches in the area of migration statistics, recent improvements have included:

- constructing estimates of emigration (U.S. to Canada; Canada to U.S.) and temporary migration, part of a joint Canada and U.S. effort to improve migration data through collaborative projects (North American Migration Working Group).

12. In terms of the progress made within the economic framework on devising consistent methodological approaches in the area of migration statistics, recent improvements have included:

- national compilers of balance of payments and national accounts statistics are involved in an extensive process of consultation and review. BOPCOM, the Mode 4 group, and various other technical expert groups reporting to BOPCOM (and the ISWGNA) include representatives of compiling agencies from around the world. The Annotated Outline was distributed to compiling agencies with invitations for critical comments. Issue papers prepared by members of technical expert groups are available for comment from the websites of the IMF and the UNSD (IMF);
- the ILO will participate in the expected review and possible extension of the UN Recommendations to cover migrant workers and Mode 4 under GATS (the presence of natural persons) (ILO); and
- the International Migration Data Base is being updated, in close cooperation with other international and regional organizations (ILO).

13. International organizations and NSOs have continued to be engaged in the discussions of data quality issues in international migration statistics. These meetings have varied greatly in their focus, whether it be on progress made within a given world region or on a particular methodological issue. Some meetings were ad hoc, whereas others are part of a standing meeting schedule. Also, through the use of these forums concerted efforts have been made to address migration data issues before the 2010 census round. (See Appendix 1 for meeting details.)

14. The OECD undertook in mid-2003 a project to compile available data on the stock of immigrants in OECD countries, including variables such as country of origin, educational attainment, and occupation. One expected output of the project would be data on expatriates present and working in other OECD countries by level of educational attainment. Such information could be useful in addressing policy questions about the mobility of the highly skilled work force.

ISSUES AND PROBLEMS (KEY NEW ISSUES, GAPS, PROBLEMS, AND DEVELOPMENTS)

15. Despite the dedicated and near universal support for improving migration data in the demographic and economic arenas, the quality of international and internal migration statistics nevertheless needs improvement. In 2005, new and emerging issues feature prominently in the discussions on migration data quality, such as the changing data needs due to heightened attention to national security interests, legislatively-mandated data collections, and the

ongoing efforts to harmonize terminology, definitions, and even methods of migration data collection.

16. Issues within the current demographic framework for migration statistics center on: differences between estimates based on migratory flows versus foreign population stocks; inconsistencies across terminology and definitions regarding migrants, migration, and residency; and the general lack of (quality) data on flows, especially on out-flows (emigration).

The joint international data collection of migration statistics mentioned in paragraph 10 is a positive step toward reducing inconsistencies in the definitions and terminology used to collect the data and in reducing the burden on countries to provide these data. Eurostat is developing European legislation in an attempt to give a formal legal basis for this joint data collection and other migration statistics activities in the European Union. The basic approach of the legislation is to harmonise definitions (in line with the UN recommendations), rather than to harmonise data sources.

17. Issues within the current economic framework for migration statistics center on: inconsistencies across terminology; and definitions regarding migrants, migration, and residency.

- An important current topic concerns remittances, linking migrants in demographic statistics to transfers in the current account of balance of payments statistics. Consistent definitions that are practical in implementation and useful for data users are being developed (IMF).

18. Completing projects in time for the 2010 round of censuses is a relatively universal and useful milestone for international organizations and NSOs that collect, analyze, disseminate, or archive data on migration. However, concerns have been raised as to the feasibility of achieving improved data quality in this area in the time required to be implemented in the 2010 census round.

- Although significant progress has been made by several agencies and in several world regions, as of early 2005, there exists no universal plan for comprehensive implementation of the UN recommendations on international migration statistics that meet the 2010 timeframe.

19. Despite the efforts to gain universal agreement on the implementation of the UN Recommendations, international organizations and NSOs have not yet been able to achieve this owing to structural constraints (e.g., legislative requirements), operational constraints (fielding censuses and surveys during a certain time of year or with set limits on questionnaire space), among other significant issues that make harmonization a serious challenge.

- Estimates of international migration flows and stocks remain very low in quality, and in order to improve them it is important that NSOs work in close cooperation with the other government agencies and administrations concerned. Overall, countries should be urged to work towards achieving a greater degree of harmonisation in national definitions of immigration and emigration, and to complying more fully with the UN recommendations. For some NSOs, these efforts would involve adopting international definitions for incorporation into their own national statistics, for others these efforts would involve the actual production of statistics according to international definitions.

IMPORTANT ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE CONFERENCE

20. Migration statistics are part of the greater discussion of national security and national sovereignty. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, in New York and Washington, DC, and March 11, 2004, in Madrid, new issues have emerged causing international organizations and NSOs to revisit their current and planned activities and the priority order of those activities. Migration statistics is one area that has been significantly affected by the emphasis of states on national security matters.

- Disclosure, confidentiality, privacy, and sensitivity are four related areas that have received increased attention since the fall of 2001. Discussions should attend to these broad issues that include questions such as, how much information to disclose that will provide useful detail about the size, characteristics, and impact of migrants on a given area or labor market without revealing the identity of individuals or concentrations of individual groups; and how to address concerns about the sensitivity or distrust within certain communities about government interest in collecting information on migratory behaviour and with what other agencies that information will ultimately be shared.
- Data collection methods—both how to collect information and what information to collect—have also received more scrutiny since 2001. As NSOs prepare for the 2010 census round, questions of improvements in data quality in migration statistics are being weighed against questions regarding the amount of information the government, and more specifically, the statistical agencies, should be collecting about the foreign populations residing within their borders. NSOs along with international organizations should revisit the “best practices” approach to collecting such information given the interest in national security that, for most states, has not existed for some time if ever.
- Dissemination and archiving methods—both how and what information to release—have been revisited, balancing new technological advances in data mining and storage with the commitment to protection of personal information (privacy). Publishing detailed (geographic or otherwise) information about immigrants has become a more sensitive and necessary topic to raise as progress is made toward the 2010 census round.
- Discussion of these issues as mutually exclusive themes is challenging. Matters of coverage, inclusion (population universe), and item response each overlap with one another as well as with previously mentioned issues such as sensitivity and data collection. Given new concerns of national security and population profiling, NSOs should address the potential impact that such issues have on survey and item response rates and which population groups should be (expect to be) included in surveys and censuses. Questionnaire design and marketing are two areas that should be considered.

21. Little work has been done to bridge the gap between demographic and economic frameworks in migration statistics:

- in the short-to-medium term (the 2010 census timeframe), a plan should be developed and implemented for the harmonization of demographic and economic data on migration. As a first step, an inventory of elements common to both frameworks should be outlined and detailed;
- migration data exist as both transaction- and people-based depending on the mission and interest of a given office. Efforts have been made within the demographic framework to

build a crosswalk between the two types of data on migrants. The feasibility of such bridges should be considered across the demographic and economic frameworks as well;

- similar to the issue with transaction- and people-based migration data, stock and flow data are collected and disseminated differently based on the needs and interests of the office responsible for their production. Attempts to assess the need for either or both and the possibility of using both should be pursued across the demographic and economic frameworks;
- residency continues to remain an important and often overlooked issue regarding migration statistics, especially in terms of comparability across demographic and economic frameworks. Consistency in defining residency should be sought that would acknowledge the divergent needs for different residency rules, but also explore the feasibility of more commonly accepted notions of who is and who is not a resident.

22. International organizations and NSOs should continue their work towards improved data quality by highlighting where the recommendations of international organizations meet national practices and pursuing meaningful efforts toward bridging the differences between the two.

- In February 2005, the CES Bureau discussed the creation of a single clearing-house that would provide a list of international agencies, NSOs and projects that address the improvement of data quality in migration statistics. This body would not oversee projects but would simply serve as a single location from which progress towards improved data quality could be assessed. It would house information on the key organizations, contact persons, projects, project progress reports, and any relevant legislative actions that impact on the progress made toward improved and consistent migration data.
- The Bureau considered that the joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on migration statistics (21-23 March 2005, Geneva) would be an appropriate forum to act as a focal point for information on international projects in migration statistics. The Bureau recommended that this meeting create a Steering Group that would prepare a programme of work on migration for coming years and would possibly set up a clearing house on migration statistics as outlined above.
- In March 2005, the joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on migration statistics (following the CES Bureau recommendation) proposed future work within the overall objective of improving the use of harmonized concepts and definitions of stock of migrants and within the framework of the UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration. The expected outputs of this work are: 1) the development of guidelines on how to measure emigrants through data on stocks, and supplemented by information on flows of immigrants, collected in hosting countries. The guidelines will be based on pilot projects carried out by groups of 3-4 countries that will exchange data taking into account issues of data suitability, timeliness, and availability; and 2) the designation of a group responsible for the establishment of a process to review and update a list of projects active in the countries of the UNECE to improve the availability of data on migration.

APPENDIX 1: RELEVANT MEETINGS, WORKSHOPS, AND SEMINARS IN 2004 AND 2005

- Eurostat: Asylum and Migration Statistics Meeting (February 2004)
- NAMWG Administrative and Technical Meetings – U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Statistics Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática de México (February, May, and September 2004)
- UNPD: Coordinating Meeting on International Migration effort to bring together international organizations within the UN system and select other organizations (including national statistical agencies) (October 2004)
- UNECE: Seminar on New Methods for Population Censuses, and Joint ECE-Eurostat Work Sessions on Population Censuses and Housing Censuses (November 2004)
- OECD: Continuous Reporting System on Migration (SOPEMI) Expert Group (December 2004)
- Eurostat: Demographic Statistics and Population and Housing Censuses (February 2005)
- UNECE (CES): Joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics (February and March 2005)
- U.S. Federal Working Group on International Migration Statistics and Research. Over 20 agencies in the U.S. federal statistical system working towards identifying common goals and problems in the area of migration statistics. (beginning February 2005)
- UNSD: Seminar on International Migration (planned May 2005)

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