Data Sources for Migration Statistics

Training Workshop on the Use of Administrative
Data for Migration Statistics in Maldives

10-12 December 2024, Malé, Maldives

Elena De Jesús

Overview

United Nations | DESA
Statistics Division

Core Migration Statistics

			Primary topics for disaggregation
STOCKS	1.1	Number/proportion of _____ in the total resident population **Foreign-born population** **Foreign citizen** Foreign-born citizen Native-born foreign citizen **Foreign-born foreign citizen** **Native-born (native) citizens**	1.Age 2.Sex 3.Country of birth 4.Country of citizenship
	1.2	Number of _____ who obtained citizenship over a given year Native-born foreign citizen **Foreign-born foreign citizen**	1.Age 2.Sex 3.Country of birth 4.Country of citizenship
FLOWS	1.3	Annual number of immigrants who are _____ **Foreign-born population** **Foreign citizen** Foreign-born citizen Native-born foreign citizen **Foreign-born foreign citizen** **Native-born (native) citizens**	1.Age 2.Sex 3.Country of birth 4.Country of citizenship
	1.4	Annual number of emigrants who are _____ **Foreign-born population** **Foreign citizen** Foreign-born citizen Native-born foreign citizen **Foreign-born foreign citizen** **Native-born (native) citizens**	1.Age 2.Sex 3.Country of birth 4.Country of citizenship

POLICY AREA 1

Improve the measurement of international migration and temporary mobility stocks and flows

Stocks: size, characteristics and geographic distributions of international migrant and temporary populations present in the country at a particular point in time

Flows: number of immigrants and emigrants during a given year

United Nations | DESA Statistics Division

Data Sources

Population Census

Comprehensive national enumeration of all persons capturing demographic data

Surveys

- Specialized migration surveys
- HH surveys / LFS
- Passenger surveys

Administrative Data Sources

- Population registers
- Border records
- Residence permits
- Visa databases
- Social security records

Non-traditional data sources

Can supplement traditional data sources, filling data gaps

Population Census - Advantages

Universal Coverage*

of resident population, including undocumented migrants, refugees and stateless persons

Reliable source

in the absence of comprehensive administrative registers

Rich socio-demographic data

and characteristics allow comparisons between migrants and non-migrants

Basis for survey sampling frames

and population estimates between census years

* In theory

Population Census - Limitations

Infrequent
New data available approximately every 10 years

Limited Space
Questionnaire space is costly, limiting migration-specific questions

Flow Limitations
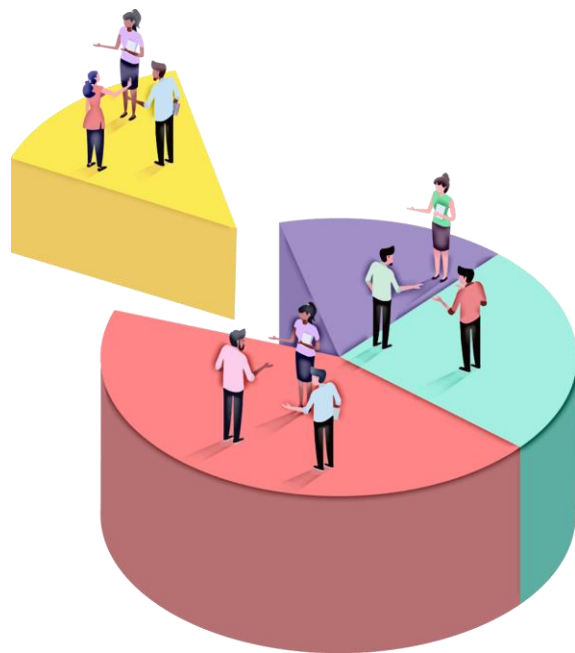Cannot capture detailed migration flows, particularly emigration

Undercounting
Potential undercounting of highly mobile populations, undocumented, etc.

Surveys

- ➤ **Specialized migration surveys**

- ➤ **Modules added to household surveys**

- ➤ **Passenger surveys**

Advantages

+ More frequent than censuses

+ Can include detailed migration modules

+ Allow in-depth analysis of migration causes/consequences

+ Flexible design to target migrant populations

Limitations

- Sample size issues for migrant subgroups

- Cannot capture full migration flows

- Potential underrepresentation of migrants

- Can be resource intensive

Surveys

Specialized migration surveys	Modules added to HH surveys / LFS	Passenger surveys
Advantages		
• Flexible, targeted design • Allow in-depth analysis of migration causes/consequences	• Regular data collection • Cost-effective • Allow for mainstreaming migration data into various social areas covered by the surveys	• Information on international mobility
Limitations		
• Resource intensive - unsuitable for annual international migration statistics • Usually carried out in a receiving country	• Large samples needed to identify enough migrants for meaningful analysis • Non-random missing data • Concentration of migrants in specific regions	• Low proportion of migrants among all border-crossers • Potential exclusion of less frequent origins/destinations • Limited interview time, restricting the number of questions

Administrative Data Sources

Stocks

- Integrated population registration systems

- Centralized population registers

- Social security and health insurance registers

- Income and tax registers

- Residence permit databases

- Consular registers

Flows

- Border records

- Visa databases

- Residence / work / study permit databases

- Passport databases

- Social security and health insurance registers

United Nations | DESA Statistics Division

Administrative Data Sources

+ Continuous collection
Continuous monitoring of migration flows and updates of population stocks

+ Cost-effective and timely
Low marginal cost

+ Captures specific events
Visa issuances, border crossings, citizenship changes

+ Key variables
Often includes key variables like date of arrival, legal status

- Duration of stay and intent not captured
Typically contains dates of events or validity periods of documents

- Limited coverage
Limited to documented migrants

- Registration lag
Can lead to under or overcounting of the resident population

- Multiple statuses
One individual can have different statuses across systems

- Inconsistent definitions or concepts
May not align with statistical concepts, Definitions may not be consistent across sources

United Nations | DESA Statistics Division

Non-traditional Data Sources

+ Fill data gaps
+ Hard-to-count phenomena

- Ethical considerations
- Inherent bias
- Data access
- Complex analysis

United Nations | DESA Statistics Division

Challenges in Producing Statistics

Flow and Stock Alignment

Aligning flow and stock measurements

Population Components

Capturing all components of migrant populations

Data Integration

Integrating data from multiple sources

Consistent Definitions

Applying consistent definitions across sources

Enabling environment

Legal frameworks, allocation of resources, capacity development

Potential sources for calculating core statistics

1.1: Number/proportion of foreign-born, foreign citizens, etc. in total resident population (STOCK)

- Population census

- Population register (where available)

- Integrated administrative data

1.2: Number of people who obtained citizenship over a given year (STOCK)

- Administrative records on naturalization

- Population register (where available)

1.3: Annual number of immigrants (FLOW)

- Population register

- Integrated border crossing and residence permit data

- Survey data (e.g., questions on residence one year ago)

- Social security and health registers

1.4: Annual number of emigrants (FLOW)

- Population register (where available and well-maintained)

- Mirror statistics from main destination countries

- Household surveys with emigration modules

Thank you!

Questions?

Group work: Potential use of administrative sources for international migration statistics in Maldives