Overview of the endorsed UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility

SADC Workshop on the Use of Administrative Data for Migration Statistics

17-21 March 2025, Johannesburg, South Africa
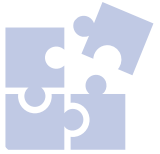
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Migration data for evidence-based policies

- **Increasing complexity of international migration** presents significant challenges for statistical measurement and policy formulation

- Despite the unprecedented needs, **statistics on international migration are sparse**

- There are significant **gaps in data collection**, especially concerning inflows and outflows, and disaggregated data (sex and age)

- The lack of consistent and comprehensive data collection methodologies across countries leads to significant **underreporting and inconsistencies in migration data**

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Revision of the 1998 UN Recommendations

Aim: to find the right balance between relevance to national policymaking and the promotion of international comparability across countries.

UN Statistical Commission: Mandate to oversee methodological work and capacity building

Agenda 2030: Disaggregation of all relevant indicators by migratory status

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, Objective 1

Revision of the 1998 UN Recommendations

Elements endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission
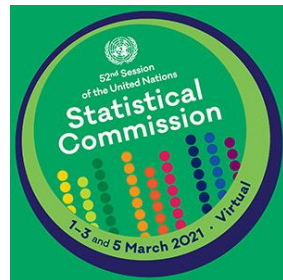
2018

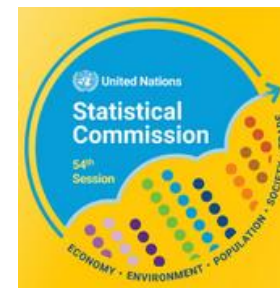The UN <u>Expert Group on Migration Statistics</u> was formalized by UN Statistical Commission

2021

Conceptual framework on migration and mobility and accompanying statistical definitions
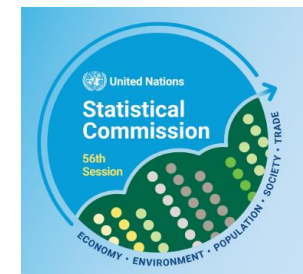
2023

List of core and additional migration indicators for six policy areas relevant to international migration and temporary mobility
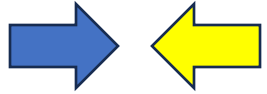
2025

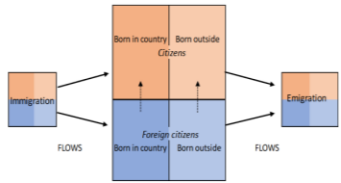**Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility**

Revised UN 2025 recommendations

- Emphasis on **statistical alignment between migration and population measurement** (flows and stocks).

- **Disaggregation of population by citizenship status (citizens vs. foreign citizens) and birthplace (native-born vs. foreign-born)** to produce statistics on four subpopulations.

- Guidance on **leveraging administrative data sources and integrating data** for measuring migration and selected types of temporary mobility.

- Importance of **legal frameworks and data sharing agreements** among government departments within countries and collaboration across departments within NSOs.

- Importance of **effective and strategic communication** and engagement before / during data collection, as well as during dissemination

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Contents of revised Recommendations

- **Executive summary** with <u>key recommendations</u> for countries to apply in their migration data systems
1. **Introduction** (rationale for the revision and policy areas relevant for statistics of international migration and temporary mobility)
2. **Statistical concepts and definitions**
3. **Compiling statistics on stocks and flows of migrants**
4. **Establishing or improving national migration data systems** (an overview of data sources and specific recommendations for different type of systems)
5. **Data integration** (micro- and macro-data integration methods)
6. **Communicating international migration statistics**
7. **Conclusion**
- Annexes:
  A. Main differences with the previous recommendations in terms of concepts and definitions
  B. Recommended tabulations for international migration statistics
  C. Checklist for transitioning to or improving a combined migration data system
  D. Glossary of terms
  E. References

Key recommendations

Establish a **clear distinction between international migration and international temporary mobility**
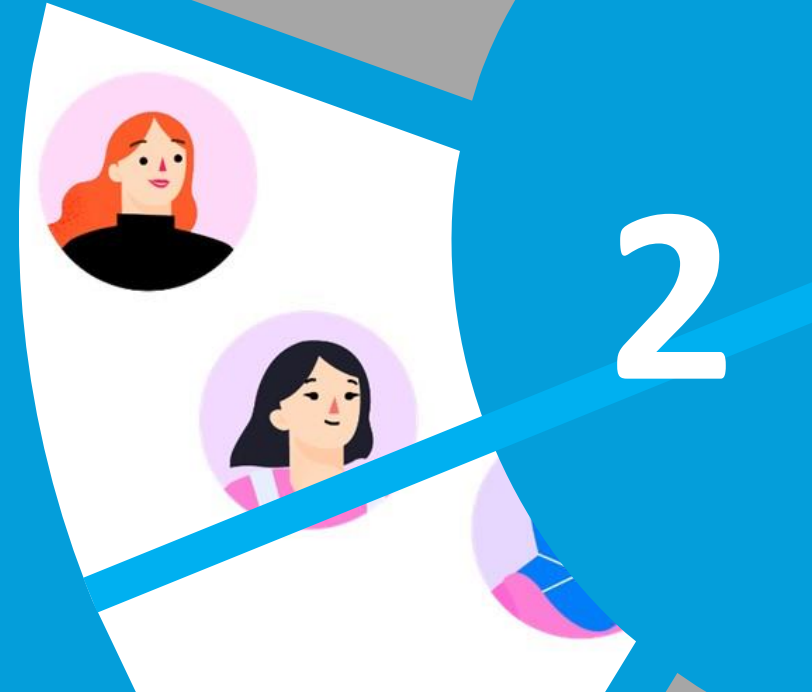
International migration is defined by a change in country of residence, while temporary mobility includes all other international border crossings that do not result in such a change.

1

Key recommendations

Ensure **statistical alignment between migration and population measurement**

The measurement of migration flows should correspond with the definition and measurement of the resident population, ensuring consistency in duration criteria for identifying both immigrants/emigrants and the resident population at the national level.
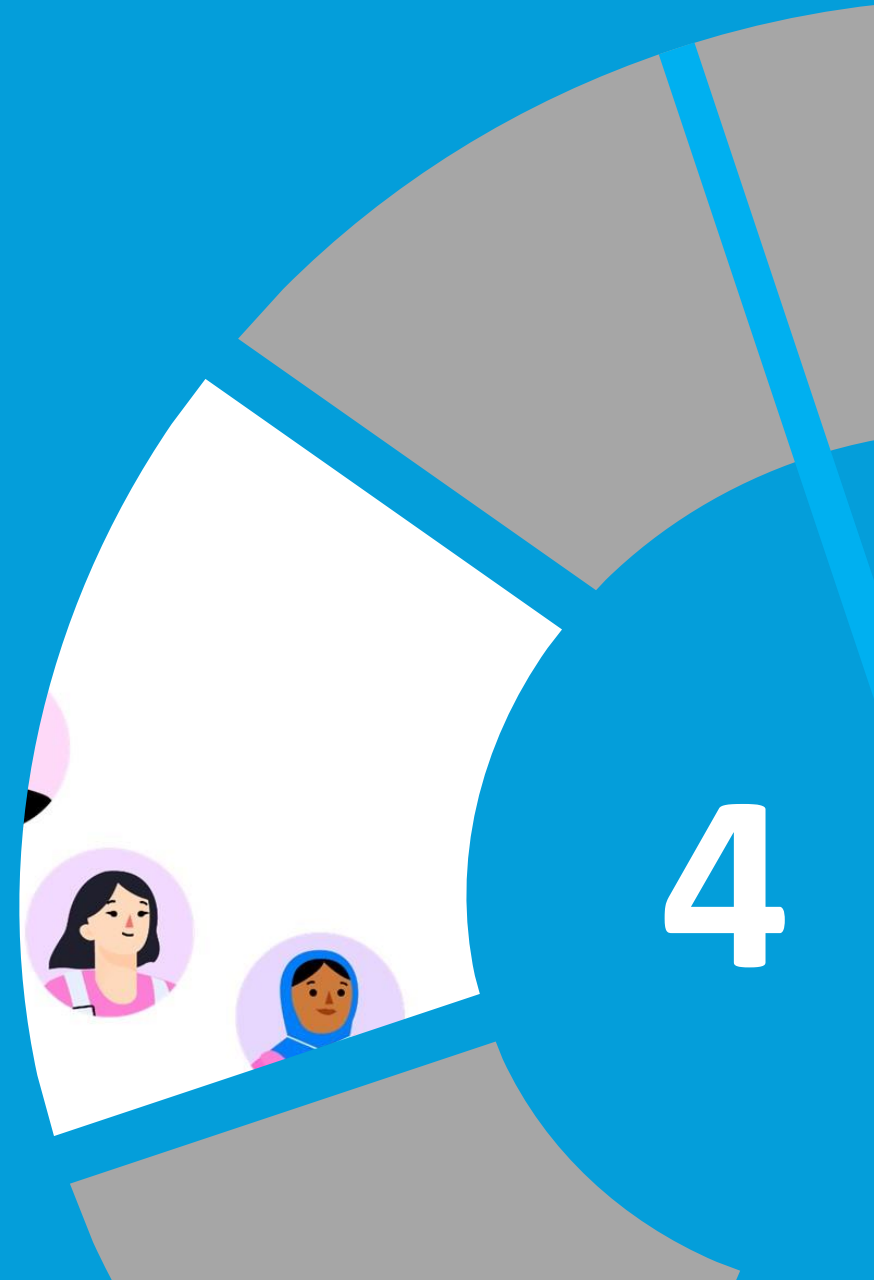
2

Key recommendations

Disaggregate population and migration statistics by citizenship status and birthplace to produce statistics on native-born citizens, native-born foreign citizens, foreign-born citizens, and foreign-born foreign citizens to establish a meaningful basis for understanding the impacts of migration on population and social change
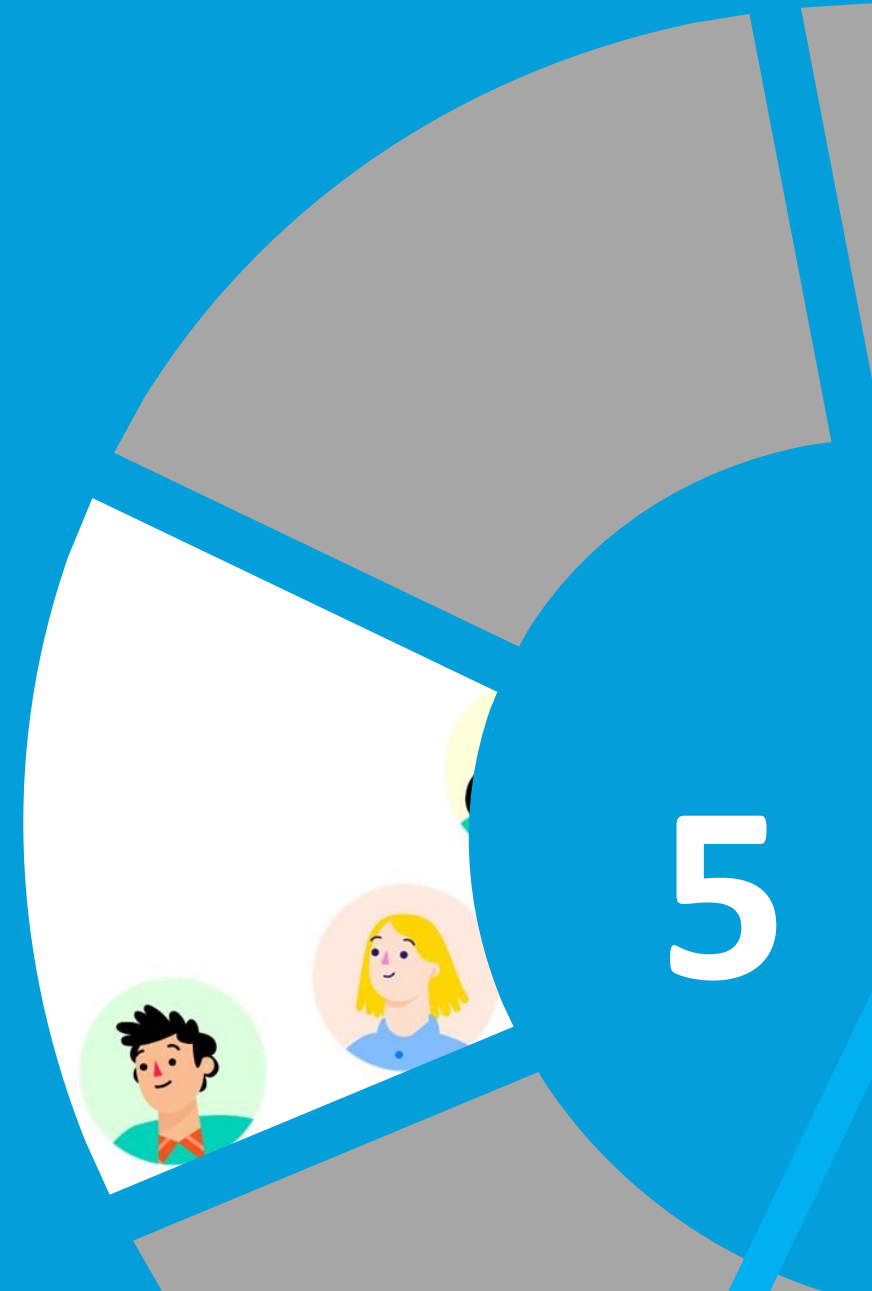
3

Key recommendations

Strengthen and leverage administrative data sources for measuring migration and temporary mobility flows.

Administrative data, including residence permit and border control statistics, typically provide the most comprehensive information on the numbers of persons entering or exiting the country over time.

4

Key recommendations

Develop legal frameworks and data sharing agreements among government departments within countries to enable data integration and use for multiple purposes, including migration statistics and population estimation, in line with relevant data governance and protection standards.

5

Key recommendations

Promote collaboration among national statistical offices and with international organizations to ensure data comparability, process efficiency and quality.

As migration involves movement between countries, measurement could be improved through sharing information on entries, exits, stays, residence and change of migration status by country of birth and citizenship.

6

Key recommendations

Combine different data sources and use data integration techniques to make better use of existing information, to generate new datasets and estimates and to provide more complete statistics on migration, temporary mobility and migrants.

7

Key recommendations

Develop strategic plans and targets for improving the production of migration and temporary mobility statistics.

The Recommendations propose strategies tailored to countries' current data infrastructure capabilities. This includes incorporating experimental statistics to explore different data sources and measures of migration, including non-traditional data sources, to fill data gaps or generate more timely estimates.

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Thank you!

Questions?

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INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY
All movements that cross **international borders** within a given year

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION
All movements resulting in a **change in the country of residence** within a given year

INTERNATIONAL TEMPORARY MOBILITY
All movements that cross international borders and **do not result in a change in the country of residence** (stays shorter than the duration criteria for establishing residence)

Alignment with P&R on Censuses, statistical frameworks on specific migrant populations (labour migrants, refugees)

Focus on: movements related to **labour, education, medical care, asylum seekers in transit**.
Tourism and business travel not covered by framework.

1998 Recommendations	Revised Recommendations
Country of usual residence vaguely defined	**Country of residence** defined based on duration of stay criteria. Two options from P&R on censuses: 6 months + 1 day or 12 months
Long-term and short-term migrants	**International migrant** defined as a person who changes country of residence. Distinction between international migration and temporary mobility.
Base population of long- and short-term migrants	**Resident population and temporary (non-resident) population**

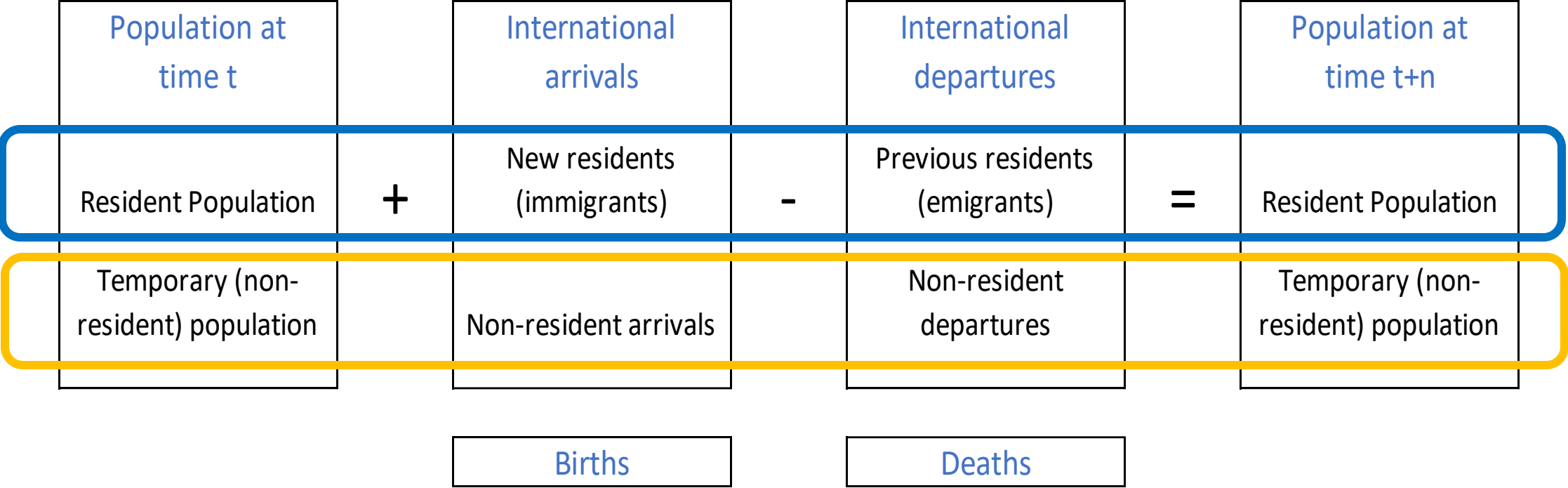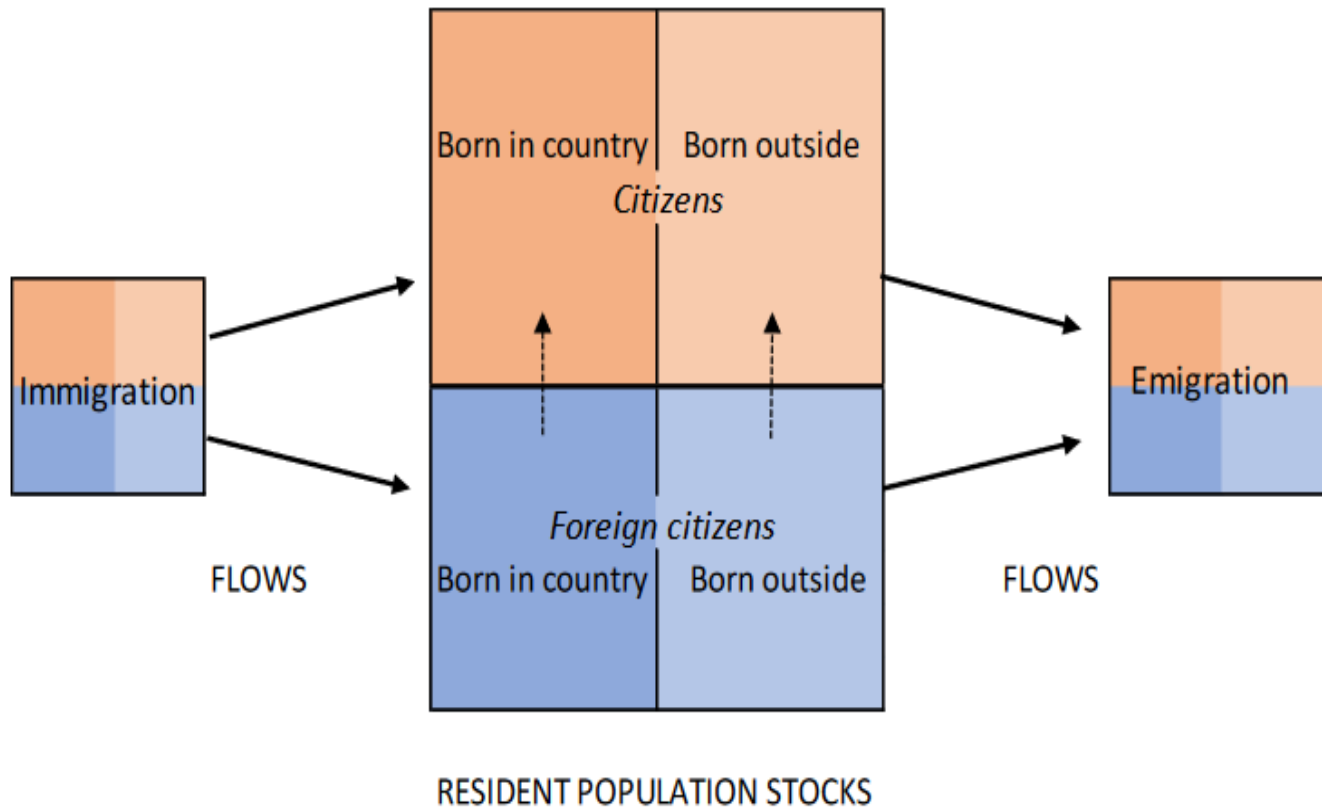# Same measurement criteria ⇨ **consistency** in national statistics

Population at time t		International arrivals		International departures		Population at time t+n
Resident Population	+	New residents (immigrants)	-	Previous residents (emigrants)	=	Resident Population
Temporary (non-resident) population		Non-resident arrivals		Non-resident departures		Temporary (non-resident) population
		Births		Deaths		

Fig. Overarching conceptual framework on international mobility statistics

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

Cross-tabulations of these four subpopulations critical to understanding international migrant populations and their movements:

- Foreign-born foreign citizens
- Foreign-born citizens
- Native-born foreign citizens
- Native-born citizens

From a policy perspective, presenting statistics and indicators for the four subpopulations separately is highly relevant.