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**Updating the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses:
Implications for Revising Guidelines on Internal and International Migration.¹
(Technical Sub-Group on Internal and International Migration Statistics)^{*}**

By

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¹ These observations are based on a review of *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Recommendations on Statistics of International Migrations, Revision 1* and Recommendations from the United Nations Workshop on Improving the Compilation of International Migration Statistics, Geneva, September 2003.

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A. Why is there a need to update Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses on Internal and International Migration?

The growing importance of international migration in the agenda of policy makers has raised the awareness on the need for more complete, timely and comparable international data on the movement of people across countries. Yet, with the increasing globalization of travel and the progressive elimination of borders across countries, it is progressively more difficult to collect information on migrants. The number of users is increasing as is the variety of the information required: international migration data is not only required for demographic purposes but also for other fields such as international trade in services, tourism, and national security.

An important contribution of the United Nations *Recommendations* is the *taxonomy, framework* and *cells* that could be used at national level to assess statistics on travel and cross-border movements that are being compiled, and to combine data from different sources.

As conceptualized, the *Recommendations* primarily fulfill the purpose of demographic analysis. There is need to broaden its scope to cover diverse descriptive and analytical needs required for different policy purposes, including various types of descriptive analysis such as trade in services, employment and human resources.

B. Issues of Emerging Relevance for Consideration in the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses

A perusal of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* reveals a number of issues for consideration in the revision thereof. Three major issues for consideration need to focus broadly around Comparability, Compatibility and Methods.

1. Comparability

1.1. Definitions:

There is need to review and clarify several concepts used in international migration statistics, such as: citizenship, non-migrant, inflows that are not migration, usual residence (in light of frequent movements across borders), and resident population. Moreover, the use of the term “foreigner” is confusing, as there are different ways of interpreting the term. The general term “foreign population” should be used to represent foreign-born and foreign-citizenship. There are also differences in the use of these terms.

For example, the concept of place of usual residence is linked to the measurement of both internal and international migration. The place of usual residence is the geographic place where the enumerated person usually resides.

Making the definition of usual residence operational in a census create potential problem for number of reasons. Persons who maintain two or more residences, students living at school, members of the armed forces living at a military base but still maintaining private living quarters away from the

installation, and persons who sleep away from their homes during the working week but return home for several days at the end of each week. Currently, the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision I* do not provide guidelines on how to deal with these situations, but instead request that “the treatment of all such cases should be clearly set forth in the census instructions” Without specific guidelines, it is conceivable that countries do not treat these groups the same, ***hence affecting the international comparability of data.***

1.2. Time Period:

Based on a review of country experience for the 2000 round of census and also on the views of experts, the updated *Principle and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* could recommend time periods to be used for defining a “usual” resident of a place. Also more guidance is needed to help countries determine the treatment of persons who appear to have more than one residence to allow comparability between countries in the data collected.

2. Compatibility

What is missing from the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Census* are definitions of the concepts used in the *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migrations, Revision I*. For example, although the census recommendations make reference to the relevant paragraph that contains the definition of an international migration in the international migration recommendations, this definition to be contained in the census recommendations. In addition, the census recommendations should include the definitions of the concepts of foreigners and foreign-born population, which are derived from the items on citizenship, and country of birth respectively. This again only emphasizes the need to revisit the issue of definitions on the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Census*

The updated census recommendations should also provide guidelines on how to deal with the issue of multiple citizenships when collecting information on citizenship as this information is crucial in distinguishing between foreigners and citizens.

Experts may wish to consider whether census guidelines on international migration should also include recommendations on collecting data on emigrants.

3. Methods

There is the need to estimate irregular migration, as this, in several countries, is the main component of migratory movements. Duration of stay should be estimated when not available especially when the country of birth identifies stock of migrants, in order to highlight special cases. In the era of ease of travel, there is a need not only to know the year of first entry but also year of last entry. There is a need to examine the implications of regional agreements to the possibility of distinguishing between citizens and foreigners with traditional data sources. There is also a need to review the duration component of the definition of migrant to ensure that it can be applied for the different sources, and the concept of usual residence may need to be examined in light of more frequent movements across

international borders. As international migration is one of the most important components of population change, appropriate methodologies need to be developed to take this into consideration.

D. Proposal by South Africa:

South Africa is actively engaging in migration issues through the establishment of a migration working group that will address conceptual, methodological and policy-related issues on migration in South Africa and in Southern Africa more broadly. The significance of migration issues in South Africa has translated itself in a number of forms including the recent production of a book titled “The Demography of South Africa” which also analyses linkages between migration and unemployment in South Africa.

The migration working group in South Africa has reflected on the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Census* and suggests the following proposal:

(a) Internal Migration

1. The importance of internal migration in Southern Africa cannot be overstated. It is therefore recommended that a revised version of *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Census* consider internal migration because of the growing significance and volume of internal migration.

There is a need for population census questions to disentangle the different streams of migration to identify definitive streams and to help isolate streams to help understand a number of issues such as household formation, household size, and remittances. Migration questions need to help address who is moving in terms of age and sex and from where? This can be achieved through the introduction of census questions that enumerate not only the respondent but also absent members of the household.

2. There is a need to code place names. This makes provision for planning purposes at a local level. There is a great deal of pressure from Government departments to have information at that level.
3. Census questions need to take cognizance of multilocal households. This takes into account the need for census questions to be sensitive to socio-cultural, political and economic change in many countries especially African countries. By 2010, these dynamics will be even more intense, influencing migration even further. Migration questions therefore need to be phrased so that they capture information on multiple households as a number of migrants have more than one household and this affects the movement of persons, goods and services.
4. A question needs to be included on the year of arrival AT THIS PLACE.
5. Census questions on remittances are required.

(b) International Migration

A number of considerations in the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Census* need to be made in the 2010 round of censuses on international migration.

1. A consideration needs to be made on multi-country migration analysis

2. Similarly with internal migration, consideration of the multilocal household needs to be taken into accounts in the context of cross-border migration.
3. For refugee-producing countries, careful attention needs to be paid to the question of country of birth and/or citizenship.
4. There is a need for harmonization of data methods and dissemination of international migration statistics.

E. Recommendations and alternative approaches

- Need for multi country analysis
- Supplementary questions around citizenship (returning refugees) are required.
- Census innovation.
- There is a need to triangulate data sources to gain a better understanding of migration
- Demographic surveillance systems need to be utilized more.
- Demographic and Health Survey should be run by a national statistical office in order to harmonize sampling procedures and other methods back on the national survey
- There is a need for regular migration surveys to supplement census data
- Harmonizing entry / exit forms and core data emanating from migration data sources.