

Programme on international migration in Latin America (IMILA). Explanatory notes

At the beginning of the 1970s, the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC, launched the programme "Investigation of International Migration in Latin America" (IMILA), in order to make use of the census information on residents born abroad collected in each country and to begin an exchange process. Since then, this initiative has been a practical expression of cooperation between the countries

of the region, which make their national information on migration available to an international organization. The IMILA programme began with the processing of census information from the 1960s round for three countries, and subsequently was able to process information from most of the countries that carried out their population and housing censuses. The programme has maintained this coverage to the present time (see table I).

1. Principles and characteristics of the programme

The basic principles and main features of the IMILA programme have been recognized on numerous occasions for their originality:

- **Exchange.** The information on the population enumerated in censuses outside the country of birth is recorded in special tabulations which are processed by CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC on the basis of microdata from census database records provided by the national statistical offices. This information is used to quantify and characterize the stocks of immigrants and emigrants that are so defined for each country for the dates corresponding to each census round. The information is added to a databank, the simplest form consisting of the matrices of origin and destination of migrants between countries.

Definition of immigrants and emigrants. The questions contained in the national census forms are used to establish migration status, which is mainly

defined by the place of birth of individuals; sometimes, however, the year of arrival in the country and the country of residence at a date prior to the census are also included. The immigration and emigration estimates obtained are very important inputs for population projections. The data are processed on the basis of a specific analysis unit, which may be the country of destination or origin, depending on the information that has been processed.

Profile of the migrants. In addition to being used for research on specific topics by means of additional processing of the database records (for example, by household characteristics), census data on persons born abroad are used to produce another 14 tabulations. These tabulations cover sociodemographic and socioeconomic features (sex, age, fertility, infant mortality, marital status, education and occupational category) and are made for each Latin American

Table I
**AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION FROM THE IMILA PROGRAMME
 ON THE CENSUS ROUNDS**

countries	Census rounds				
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Argentina	1960	1970	1980	1991	2001
Bolivia		1976		1992	2011
Brazil			1981	1991	2000
Chile		1970	1982	1992	² 2002
Colombia				1993	
Costa Rica	1963	1973	1984		2000
Cuba					
Ecuador			1982	1990	2001
El Salvador				1992	
Guatemala		1973	1981	1994	2002
Haiti		1971			
Honduras			1988		2001
Mexico				1990	² (100)
Nicaragua		1971		1995	
Panama		1970	1980	1990	2000
Paraguay		1972	1982	1992	2002
Peru			1981	1993	
Dominican Republic		1970			2012
Uruguay		1975	1985	1996	
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)		1971	1981	1990	2001
Canada		1971	1981/1986		
United States		1970	1980	1990	2000

Source: Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, Investigation of International Migration in Latin America (IMILA) programme.

Information available by the first quarter of 2006.

country which appears as a country of origin and any other country for which a minimum of 500 persons are enumerated. Some tables contain information disaggregated by sex.

Return migration. As new data are processed, consideration has been given to including an additional tabulation on return migration of those Born in a particular country that, at a specified date (five years before the census), lived outside their country of birth. This information can be used to evaluate return characteristics, for example, by comparing the sociodemographic and economic characteristics of the return population with those of the non-migrant population.

Immigrants from the Caribbean and other regions. Immigrants from outside Latin America have always been included in the tabulations, and hence data is available to identify the composition by sex and age, employment characteristics, sociodemographic and

educational profiles, of European, Asian and African populations. In the case of immigrants Born in the Caribbean, the 2000 census round included all of the Caribbean countries, independently of the minimum size mentioned above.

Availability of data: CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC periodically publishes the data systematized by the IMILA programme in *its Demographic Bulletin* and makes them available to potential users on the Population Division's web site within the ECLAC portal (<http://www.celac.org/eclade/default.asp?idioma=LN>). The latest such issue was *Demographic Bulletin No. 65*, published in the year 2000, which included data on the census rounds of 1970, 1980 and 1990 in the countries which carried out the censuses and submitted the information. This new publication, *Demographic Observatory*, presents data from the 2000 census round and from 1988 in the case of Honduras. At present, an online databank for the last

two census rounds is also available, which can be used to obtain tabulations through two search methods: (i) the emigrants of a country, that is, those persons whose country of residence is not their country of birth; and (ii) the immigrants of a country, that is, the persons who entered the country where the census was carried out or their current country of residence, for a particular country of birth.'

Geographical coverage. Although since the beginning the main goal of the IMILA programme was to collect census data from the 20 countries that make up the Latin American region for statistical purposes (including three Caribbean countries: Cuba,

the Dominican Republic and Haiti), the databank has also included information on Latin Americans enumerated in the censuses of countries outside the region, especially the United States and Canada, and the English-speaking Caribbean countries. Thanks to the Internet, partial data from other destination countries has gradually been included (European countries, Australia, Israel and Japan). Collecting this information is not an easy task and the constant updating and enhancing of the database depends to a large extent on the availability of information and the willingness of countries to share their information.

2. The potential and limitations of the programme

The information that appears in the IMILA programme's databank has both potential and limitations that are worth mentioning. The census data are not always known

or fully utilized and sometimes have obvious flaws. There follow below a few conceptual and technical clarifications.

(a) Conceptual clarifications

The programme has capitalized on the advantages of the censuses, such as their universality and the vast range of sociodemographic and socioeconomic data collected, taking into account their varying degrees of reliability, which depends on the quality of each census operation.

A databank is now available including information from the census rounds from 1970 to 2000. The data for 13 countries from the 2000 round had been processed by the first quarter of 2006 (Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Paraguay); the results are available from the web site of CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC. It has not yet been decided which countries' data will be processed next, but it is expected that work will begin when CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC has access to the census databases of the countries where the censuses have been carried out.

The users, who include researchers, academics, government and international organization officials and a large number of media professionals in the countries, are constantly warned that the census information collected by the IMILA programme has certain limitations owing to the nature of censuses, and these can be serious when dealing with emerging issues in international migration. For example, the variables identifying households with members

resident abroad and households that receive remittances are not included in all of the 2000 censuses.

Firstly, in some censuses there is differential under-registration in relation to the total population and international migrants. This situation occurs most frequently in the case of persons who do not belong to a household, as in the case of individual immigrants and those who are undocumented (who cannot be identified even when they are enumerated). The censuses are unable to provide direct information concerning the numbers of irregular immigrants, although the census data may serve as an input for estimation exercises comparing different approaches. In the 2000 census round, despite the fact that many countries managed to improve their census coverage of the total population, the percentages of omission varied between 2% and 8%.

A second type of limitation affects the international comparability of the data, in view of the varying periodicity of national census operations and the different interpretations of the concept of residence in *de facto* and *de jure* censuses. Perhaps the most restrictive is the fact that census operations are carried out at extensive time intervals and not all countries conduct censuses in mid-period. Nor do all censuses include questions on immigrants.

The site has recently been redesigned. In addition to the online databank, it offers information on and links to other information system initiatives (www.eclac.org/cclade/default.asp?idioma=tN).

A third type of conceptual limitation concerns methodology. All censuses enumerate the population existing at a particular time, and the information thus only refers to the total stock of migrants that has accumulated up until that time (the number of surviving migrants who did not migrate again before the census date) and does not reflect the migration that took place over time, so that the concept of migration as a process is lost from view. This means that complementary sources of information are needed, if available. It is therefore impossible to record annual flows and their variations over a period of time, or net migration levels of nationals and foreigners.

A fourth limitation, related to the previous one, is the lack of options available so far to cover the diversity

of spatial mobility of persons in a limited number of questions in population and housing censuses. It seems that the censuses cannot meet this requirement satisfactorily in view of the excessive number of questions needed.

Bearing in mind the strengths and limitations referred to, CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC recommended that the countries continue with the procedure of previous years in the 2000 census round (keeping the same questions in the census forms) in order to ensure continuity for the IMILA programme's databank and the studies for which it has been used. The questions are: country of birth, period of arrival in the country and country of residence five years previously.

(b) Technical considerations

There are two strictly technical issues that should be mentioned. On the one hand, since the 1980 census round, most of the TMILA programmes data has been processed on the basis of the census databases that each country made available to CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC and this procedure was maintained in the 2000 round. Since the 1990 round, the processing has been carried out using the REDATAM software (REDATAM+SP is the current version) developed by CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC.²

The TMILA programme now has an online databank which allows users to operate with great autonomy and in accordance with their interests. The information available is contained in the TMILA tabulations while the actual census microdata is not available to the public and continue to be processed as part of the research carried out in the context of the work programme of CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC work.

The online databank is considered to be the most secure and useful way of maintaining, using, updating and improving the TMILA databank.

As for the processing of data, it has been observed over the past few years that countries have not systematically used the standardized international codes for identifying the country of origin of persons (birth, previous residence) and economic variables (including occupational categories and sectors of economic activity). In some cases, this has impeded the rapid processing of census data and CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC has recommended that statistical offices use the international list of country identification codes (for example, Standard Country or Area Codes for Statistical Use).

² This computer programme, which may be downloaded free of charge (www.eclac.org/eelade), allows each researcher to operate directly with the census databases and process the information — even at strictly geographical scales — in order to meet their research objectives.

IMILA: Standard Tabulations (1960 and 1970 censuses)

Table 1: Population enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth, sex and age group.

Table 2: Population 10 years of age and over, enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth, marital status, sex and age group.

Table 3: Population 10 years of age and over, enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth, employment status and sector of economic activity, sex and age group.

Table 4: Population 10 years of age and over, enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth, years of schooling completed, sex and age group.

Table 5: Female population 15 years of age and over, enumerated in a country and born in other countries aged 15 years and over, by country of birth, number of live births, marital status, sex and age group.

Table 6: Economically active population 10 years of age and over, enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth, branch of economic activity and occupation.

Table 7: Economically active population 10 years of age and over, enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth, divisions and groupings of economic activity, occupational subgroups of professionals, technicians and persons in related occupations.

Table 8: Population enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth and period of arrival, sex and age group.

Table 9: Population 5 years of age and over, enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth, residence 5 years previously, sex and age group.

Table 10: Population enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth and sex.

IMILA: Standard Tabulations (1980, 1990 and 2000 censuses)

Table 1: Population enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth, sex and age group.

Table 2: Population 10 years of age and over, enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth, marital status, sex and age group.

Table 3: Population 10 years of age and over, enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth and employment status, sex and age group.

Table 4: Population 10 years of age and over, enumerated in a country and born in other countries, economically active, by country of birth, branch of economic activity, sex and age group.

Table 5: Population 10 years of age and over enumerated in a country and born in other countries, not economically active, by country of birth, sex and age group.

Table 6: Population 10 years of age and over, enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth, years of schooling completed, sex and age group.

Table 7: Women 15 years of age and over, enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth, number of live births, marital status and age group.

Table 8: Female population enumerated in a country and born in other countries aged 10 years and over, by country of birth, number of live births and surviving children and age group.

Table 9: Economically active population 10 years of age and over, enumerated in a country and born in other countries, economically active, by country of birth, employment status and sector of economic activity, sex and age group.

Table 10: Economically active population 10 years of age and over, enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth, occupational category and branch of activity.

Table 11: Economically active population 10 years of age and over, enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth, occupational group of professionals, technicians and persons in related occupations, divisions and groupings of the branch of economic activity and occupational subgroup.

Table 12: Population enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth, period of arrival, sex and age group.

Table 13: Population 5 years of age and over, enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth, country of residence 5 years previously, sex and age group.

Table 14: Population enumerated in a country and born in other countries, by country of birth and sex.

A tabulation was also available for the 2000 round on return migration, based on the question concerning the place of residence five years previously.

Table II
RESEARCH TOPICS/ CENSUS DATES

Countries	Place of birth				Period of arrival				Place of residence five years previously or previous residence				Legal nationality				Emigration of relatives				
	1970	1980	1990	2000	1970	1980	1990	2000	1970	1980	1990	2010	1970	1980	1990	2000	1970	1980	1990	2000	
Argentina	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X							
Bolivia	X	N/C	X	X	-	N/C	X	X	X	X	C	X	X	-	X	C	-	-	-	N/C	X
Brazil	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Canada	X	X			X	X			X	X			X	X							
Colombia	X	X	X	N/C		X	-	NEC	-	X	X		-	-	-	N/C	-	X	-	N-C	
Costa Rica	X	X	N/C	X	-	X	N/C	X	X	X	N/C	X	X	X	N/C	X	-	-	X	C	-
Cuba	X	-	N/C	X	-	-	N/C	-	-	X	N/C				X-C				N/C		
Chile	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	X		X	X	X									
Dominican Republic	X	X	X	X	-	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	-			-	-	X	X	X	
Ecuador	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	-		-		-	-			X
El Salvador	X	N/C	X	WC	-	N/C	X	N/C	X	N/C	X	N/C	X	N/C	-	N/C	-	N/C	X	N/C	
Guatemala	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			-	-	-	-	X	X	X
Haiti	X	X	X/C	X	-	-	N/C	-	X	X	N/C	X	X	-	N/C	-	-	X	N/C	X	
Honduras	X	X	N/C	X	X	X	N/C	X	-	X	N/C	X	X	-	N/C			-		X	
Mexico	X	X	X	X	-		-	-	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X
Nicaragua	X	N/C	X	N/C	X		X		X	X	C	X	X	N/C	-	-	-	-	-	N/C	
Panama	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	X	
Paraguay	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X		X	X	X			-	-		X			
Peru	X	X	X	N/C	-		-	N/C	X	X	X	X	X	-		-	-	-			
United States	X	X	X		X	X	X	...	X	X	..		X	X				-	-		
Uruguay	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		-	-	-		N-C	X			N-C
Venezuela (Bol Rep. of)	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					

Source: Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, Investigation of International Migration in Latin America (IMITA) programme.

N/C There was no census during this decade.

- This question was not asked.

...Information not available in CELADE.

The classification of the economically active foreign population by branch of activity is practically the same in all countries, as the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) has been adopted for these purposes. Table III shows the abbreviations used for the various branches of activity.

Similarly, the classification of the economically active population by occupational status is based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO). Table IV shows the abbreviations used for the various branches of activity.

Table III
CLASSIFICATION OF THE ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE FOREIGN POPULATION BY BRANCH OF ACTIVITY, ACCORDING TO THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION (ISIC)

Tables (e) Abbreviations	Description
Agriculture...	Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing
Mining...	Mining and quarrying
Industry...	Manufacturing
Electricity...	Electricity, gas and water
Construction...	Construction..
Commerce...	Wholesale and retail trade, and restaurants and hotels
Transport...	Transport, storage and communications
Finance...	Financing, insurance, real estate and business services
Services...	Community, social and personal services
Not specified...	Activities not adequately defined

Source: Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, Investigation of International Migration in Latin America (IMILA) programme.

Table IV
CLASSIFICATION OF THE ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION BY OCCUPATIONAL STATUS, BASED ON THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF OCCUPATIONS (ISCO)

Table (f) abbreviations	Description
Executives...	Professionals, technicians and persons in related occupations
Managers...	Managers, administrators and officials in executive categories
Technicians...	Medium-level professionals and technicians
Employees...	Office employees and persons in related occupations
Salespersons...	Salespersons and persons in related occupations
Farmers...	Farmers, stockmen, fishermen, hunters, woodcutters and persons in related occupations
Drivers...	Drivers of public transport vehicles and persons in related occupations
Labourers...	Craftsmen and operators in operations related to spinning, confection of clothing and footwear, carpentry, and the construction, mechanical and graphic arts industries, and labourers and journeymen not specified in other categories
Services...	Workers in personal services and related occupations

Source: Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, Investigation of International Migration in Latin America (IMILA) programme.