A modern conceptual framework for statistics on international migration and mobility

Meryem Demirci and James Raymer on behalf of the United Nations Expert Group on International Migration Statistics

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Key aspects of new conceptual framework

1. International migration is an important part of the wider concept international mobility
2. The link between migration flows and population stocks is fundamental to understanding and improving statistics on international migration
3. Four populations defined by country of birth and country of citizenship form the basis from which statistics on flows and stocks should be gathered
4. Statistics on temporary international movements and their effects on temporary populations are included
Overarching conceptual framework on international mobility
Alignment of migration flows with resident population change

Same measurement criteria

=>

Consistency in national statistics

**Flows** are integral for understanding **resident** population change (main population used for international comparisons)
Conceptual framework on intersection between duration of stay and international mobility
Demographic accounting framework

Reconciliation of four resident subpopulations:
Native-born citizen
Foreign-born citizen
Native-born foreign citizen
Foreign-born foreign citizen

with their international migration flows and other components of population change

Population accounting approach improves accuracy and understanding
Conceptual framework on international migration and the coherence between flows and stocks
Examples of temporary population mobility associated with length of stay

Duration of stay

- **Days**: Commuting to/from work, tourism, business, study, visits to family or friends, healthcare, asylum seekers or migrants in transit
- **Weeks**: Training or education, seasonal or short-term contract workers, visits to family or friends, extended travel or vacations, asylum seekers or migrants in transit
- **Months**: Training or education, seasonal or short-term contract workers, au pair or exchange visitor, forcibly displaced people, extended visits to family or to care for relatives

Temporary population (non-resident) arrivals
Key definitions

Immigrant Population (Stock)
Residents in the country at a given point in time

OR

- Foreign-born
- Foreign citizens

Emigrant population (Stock)
Residents in another country at a given point in time

OR

- National citizens
- Native-born

Changes in the size and structure of the ‘stock’ of migrants are determined largely by flows.
Key definitions

International migrants (Flow)

- Persons who establish **new residence within a given year**
- Either immigrant or emigrant
Key definitions

International temporary mobility

- All movements that cross international border and do not result in a change in the country of residence – stay less than 6 or 12 months within a given year.
Key definitions

International temporary mobility

- Movements associated with foreign citizens:
  - in the labour market,
  - utilising education or training services,
  - seeking health or medical care services; and
  - seeking asylum or protection as refugees

- Cross-border workers
- Seasonal workers
- Training-related
- Health-related
- Asylum seekers in transit
Main changes in the current recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition of country of residence</th>
<th>1998 Recommendations</th>
<th>Proposed conceptual framework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                                   | A place to live where he or she normally spends the daily period of rest | Residing—or intend to reside in the country within a given year at least:  
  • 6 months +1 day or  
  • 12 months  
As defined in the P&R on Censuses |
| No criteria for duration of stay |                       |                               |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition of international migrants</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long term—at least 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td>A person who established new residence in the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term—between 3 and 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Same measurement criteria</strong> with the definition of usual residence</td>
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<td><strong>Consistency in national statistics</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Main changes in the current recommendations

<table>
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<th>Distinguishing international migration from other type of mobility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not included</td>
<td>Clear distinction between international migration and temporary mobility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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**Coherence between international migration (flows) and immigrant population (stocks)**

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<td>Not included</td>
<td>Reconciling the demographic components of change for the following four key subpopulations:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• native-born citizen,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• foreign-born citizen,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• native-born foreign citizen,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• foreign-born foreign citizen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

1. The quality and availability of statistics on migration flows and temporary population movements need to improve.
2. The conceptual frameworks are designed from a national statistics perspective.
3. Aligning flows and stocks will improve quality at the national level and comparability at the international level.
4. The four populations are important for both policy and measurement.
5. Types of temporary population movements and their relative importance are expected to vary by country and location.