D. Forms of tourism: inbound, domestic and outbound

2.99. Visitors may travel within their countries of residence or abroad. In doing so, they must cross political and administrative borders (except in the case of vacation homes). It is important to qualify tourism with respect to those borders in order to determine in which economy (or place) the economic effects of tourism will be experienced. It is on these issues that the concept of forms of tourism is focused (IRTS 2008, paras. 2.15 and 4.12-4.14).

2.100. With reference to a trip’s main destination, IRTS 2008 (para. 2.32) describes these forms of tourism as follows:

A domestic trip is one with a main destination within the country of residence of the visitor. An inbound or outbound trip is one with a main destination outside the country of residence of the visitor.

An outbound tourism trip might include visits to places within the country of residence in the same way as a domestic trip might include visits outside the country of residence of the visitor. [For example, a person travelling abroad may have to travel first to the city from which his or her flight departs and he or she may decide to stay there for a few days. This component of the whole trip would be considered as domestic visit].

An inbound trip, however, includes only visits within the country of reference.

2.101. IRTS 2008 (para. 2.39) distinguishes based on these characteristics, among the three fundamental forms of tourism.

2.102. It is of the utmost importance, as previously explained (see para. 2.9 above), that international visitors be classified according to their country of residence, not their nationality.

2.103. In the tabulation of the information concerning the country of residence or country of destination of outbound visitors, consideration should be given to the difference between the terms “country” and “territory”, in particular when the aim is to define geographical groupings for the purpose of designing marketing policies (specific to the country and/or internationally comparable). For international travellers, use of the UNSD classification entitled “Countries or areas, codes and abbreviations” is recommended, since the information may pertain to territories rather than countries in the political sense. Travellers going to or from the territories of France or the Netherlands in the Caribbean, for instance, should be identified as travelling to or from the Caribbean rather than to or from Europe.

2.104. Countries should also be encouraged to develop their own territorial groupings based on geographical proximity and relative importance of visitor flows. Countries might wish to identify in detail the flows of visitors and travellers coming from neighbouring countries and from within the regions (or country groupings) to which they belong and then identify separately the few other countries from which the flows of visitors and travellers are important within a grouping by regions, with those remaining countries grouped in major regional categories. For example, 15 Central and Southern African countries are members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), a body established to promote cooperation among neighbouring countries. Many of those member countries would be interested in having statistics on arrivals specifically from other member countries, separately from statistics on arrivals from nonmember countries.

2.105. Enumeration of every country in the world in the course of tabulating tourism statistics (as is often the case in migration statistics) might yield misleading results. In many cases, there will be countries for which the corresponding flows of travellers may not be significant. From a statistical perspective, yeartoyear fluctuations in those very small numbers would be viewed as random. Pressure from users requesting country details that are not statistically meaningful – e.g., where the total population of reference is very low – should be resisted.