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A SYSTEM OF DEMOGRAPHIC, MANPOWER AND SOCIAL STATISTICS
 MIGRATION STATISTICS

Recommendations for the improvement of international migration statistics:
draft revision

Report of the Secretary-General

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INTRODUCTION

1. Of the three demographic variables - fertility, mortality, and migration - it is with migration that the procedures for the collection of data are least developed and concerning which there are the fewest data for comparative analysis, either of movement between countries or of movements within the same country. Given both this paucity of migration data and the continued importance of migration - to population forecasting, to the composition of the labour force, urbanization, and the general character of economic and social change - there can be no denying the necessity of having good statistics on this significant aspect of human activity.

2. The United Nations has from time to time expressed interest in particular issues concerning migration - the so-called "brain drain," urbanization, international tourism, refugee and nomadic movements, for example. But the present international standards relating to the collection of statistics on migration were adopted as long ago as 1953 - and they pertain only to migration between countries. 1/ No international standards at all have been adopted relating to migration within countries. Nor did the Statistical Commission authorize additional work on the subject of migration statistics beyond that reported in the 1953 recommendations until its sixteenth session. What follows is a first version of the review and recommendations requested by the Statistical Commission at that time. 2/

3. The movement of population in space is a highly diverse phenomenon. Distance of move may range from a few yards to thousands of miles, and length of stay at destination from minutes to the remainder of a lifetime. Whatever their importance, however, not all of these movements can properly be classified as "migration". Though the numerous efforts made to formulate a universally acceptable definition of migration would seem to have accomplished little from the standpoint of official data-collection procedures, there does appear to be a general consensus that "migration" consists only of those spatial movements that involve: (a) a change in place of

1/ International Migration Statistics, (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 53.XVII.10), chap. II.

2/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 2, para. 109.

usual residence and (b) the crossing of a political boundary. Thus are usually excluded the movements of tourists, commuters, nomads, business travellers, frontier traffic (i.e., the frequent movements across borders of persons residing in frontier areas, who are often authorized to use simplified travel documents), students, and persons living in two or more places at different times of the year. However, as some of these movements (e.g., those of tourists and seasonal workers) are of considerable interest to certain governments, and statistics on their rate and direction are often collected in ways identical to some of those for collecting information on specifically migratory movements, the present discussion will extend, on occasion, to encompass certain of these special "migratory" movements, as well.

4. The relationship between statistics on migration and those on other demographic events and conditions derives from the fact that the net balance of migration is one of the two components of population change, the other component being natural increase, that is, the net balance of births and deaths. Of the three demographic variables - fertility, mortality, and migration - migration shows by far the greatest variability in the importance it has for different countries and regions and for various time periods, and also a substantially greater variability in the completeness and accuracy with which it is measured. Nonetheless, information on the number and characteristics of persons entering or leaving, together with data on the total number of persons at some prior point in time and the births and deaths occurring during the period since, is necessary for any complete analysis of an area's population structure; and it is important - if not always necessary - for the preparation of population forecasts, as well. Data on migration thus form an integral part of the general field of demographic statistics, of which the remainder relates to vital events and various characteristics (e.g., age, sex, marital status, schooling, fertility, household composition) of a people at any given time.

5. Migration statistics have similarly close links with statistics on labour, for economically active persons ordinarily constitute a large proportion of all who migrate. In fact, the availability of employment opportunities is frequently a major determinant of the size, composition, and direction of migratory movement.

6. Though the characteristics of the different categories of migrants, and also the reasons for their movement, are often quite similar, it is useful for most purposes - particularly for demographic purposes - to distinguish between two types of migration: international (or external) and internal. The former refers to movement across national boundaries; the latter to movement within a nation. Because the types of available data and the sources of data and the techniques of analysis and estimation resorted to in the study of international migration ordinarily differ so much from those pertaining to internal migration, these two types of migration will be discussed separately - international migration in the present document and internal migration in a separate one (E/CN.3/435). However, as will be pointed out in the course of the discussion, the most promising present source of data, and the most promising techniques of analysis and estimation, would appear to be much the same for both categories of movement.

I. STATISTICS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

A. Need for statistics on international migration

7. Statistics on international migration are collected in order to ascertain both the amount of immigration and emigration that has taken place during a given period of time and the characteristics of the persons who have migrated. Such statistics are needed for appraising the nature and magnitude of any problems involved in these movements, and for designing programmes intended to cope with these problems. They are also needed for the scientific analysis of the nature and causes of international migration, and its consequences.

8. For the calculation of merely crude rates of population increase, it would be sufficient to have only the simple difference

between the numbers moving into a territory and the numbers moving out of it. However, data of this sort have only limited utility for population forecasting as they reveal nothing concerning either numerical increase in the receiving territory originating in children born to immigrants, or numerical decrease in the territory of origin in the form of children who would presumably have been born there had not their parents emigrated. Moreover, as data merely on total numbers show nothing concerning the personal characteristics of the migrant population, they can serve none of the other needs for which governments would conceivably undergo the expense and effort of collecting statistics on movements across national or regional boundaries; needs, for example, to forecast the demand for schooling, for various kinds of housing, for employment and social security; or to assess the influence of foreign manpower on the labour market (which would require information on the numbers of immigrants in the various occupations and industries); or to understand the nature and magnitude of any problems there may be in the social and cultural assimilation of immigrants (which can be greatly facilitated by data on immigrants' sex, age, marital status, citizenship, and mother tongue).

9. Of course, where migrants are a major element in a population (as with migration to Israel, or movement from Puerto Rico to the mainland United States, or from the German Democratic Republic to the Federal Republic of Germany in the late 1940s and early 1950s), sheer numbers may have significance in and of themselves; but, generally speaking, if data on migration are worth collecting at all, they are worth collecting in more detail than that provided by recording merely the amount of total movement.

10. In short, the consideration of any and all of the complex problems associated with international migration calls for some form of statistics, be these but total figures of immigration and emigration, or more detailed statistics presenting the numbers of migrants classified according to various of their characteristics.

B. Types of data on international migration

11. As might be expected both from the differences in national experience of migration and from the variety of needs presumably

served by statistics on this process, the collection of migration data has been characterized by application of a considerable variety of definitions and procedures. This has resulted in a considerable variety, as well, in the tabulations of migration statistics. No attempt will be made here to go into any detailed description of these tabulations beyond noting that they commonly relate to three main sets of characteristics:

- (a) Demographic, including sex, age, marital status, family composition;
- (b) Social, including country of last (or intended) permanent residence, country of birth, citizenship (i.e., legal nationality), ethnic origin or race, religion, mother tongue, education, class travelled on ship, or mode of transportation;
- (c) Economic, including occupation, skill, industry (i.e., branch of economic activity), status (as employer, employee, worker on own account, and unpaid family worker), capital available, financial assistance for migration received from governmental or private sources, contractual assurance of employment in the country of destination.

In addition, many multiple classifications, based on a combination of more than one characteristic, are required for some purposes and are tabulated and published in several countries..

12. The varieties of data on external migration may be classified into three general categories: (a) "frontier statistics" - those collected on the occasion of the actual movement across an international frontier (mostly collected as a by-product of the administrative operations of frontier control), (b) those obtained in connexion with population registers, and (c) those obtained from censuses or special inquiries, such as the sample household surveys conducted in many countries, the Current Population Survey in the United States, and the special census of aliens taken in France in 1945.

II. HISTORY OF FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION STATISTICS

13. Interest in international migration statistics and in the need for their improvement has a long history. Some consideration was given to migration statistics by the International Statistical Institute at its sessions in Vienna in 1891, Budapest in 1901, Berlin in 1903, Rome in 1926, Warsaw in 1929 and Madrid in 1931. Migration statistics were also considered at the International Conference on Emigration and Immigration held in Rome in 1924 and at the Commercial Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1927.

14. Since its founding just after the First World War, the International Labour Organisation has been concerned with the international co-ordination of migration statistics, considered mostly from the man-power angle; various technical bodies of the United Nations have also been active in promoting the improvement of these data from the broader demographic, economic and social points of view. The text of the recommendations and resolutions on migration statistics adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1922, the resolutions of the International Conference on Migration Statistics convened in 1932 at Geneva by the International Labour Organisation and the 1949 draft recommendations for the improvement of migration statistics, drawn up by the Population Commission and endorsed in the same year by the Statistical Commission at its fourth session, are contained in Problems of Migration Statistics 3/ as well as in the original reports of the conferences or commissions concerned

15. The 1949 provisional recommendations of the United Nations were revised at the beginning of 1953 by the Population Commission and the Statistical Commission, taking into account the previous international resolutions and recommendations on the subject and the results of extensive consultations with the competent statistical services of the countries interested in this subject. The text of the 1953 recommendations is given in International Migration Statistics. 4/

16. To confirm the 1953 recommendations as international standards, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 469 E (XV) on 27 April 1953. This resolution called the recommendations to the attention of Governments and expressed the hope that consideration might be given to the conclusion of suitable arrangements for the collection of migration statistics as recommended. The 1953 recommendations remain the current international standards.

3/ United Nations publication, Sales No.: 50.XIII.1.

4/ United Nations publication, Sales No.: 53.XVII.10.

A. The United Nations recommendations

17. In 1932, the International Conference on Migration Statistics took the view that statistics of international migration should include every removal from one country to another, with the exception of tourist traffic. In their 1949 provisional recommendations on migration statistics and, again, in the 1953 recommendations for the improvement of international migration statistics, the Population Commission and the Statistical Commission followed the same path and recommended that statistics be obtained on all arrivals and, if possible, all departures of international travellers (with the exception of frontier traffic), classified in such a way as to show which are migrants. Thus defined, the field of international migration statistics was seen as covering permanent immigration and emigration as the items of prime importance and, on a level of secondary importance in most countries, temporary immigration and emigration, including seasonal movements but excluding frontier traffic. It was recognized, however, that, in some instances, information on frontier traffic would be needed to supplement that on migration proper.

18. The recommended source for such information, according to the 1953 recommendations,^{5/} was statistics on border crossings collected by means of "an individual statistical slip, collected at the frontier from every person" in the pertinent categories of migrants (para. 22). This information should be collected "on all arrivals and, if possible, on all departures of civilian travellers crossing international frontiers, classified in such a way as to show which are migrants" (para. 15). Where information on frontier traffic is desired, it is recommended that the volume of this movement be estimated by other means (e.g., the number of frontier cards or special season tickets issued) - means, incidentally, that, it was recommended, should distinguish workers from non-workers.

19. Though taking note of the fact that "differences between countries in the length and geographic nature of frontiers, volume of migration, national legislation regarding the control of migration, and other factors, do not make it possible to lay down

^{5/} Ibid.

a set of even minimum standards which all countries can forthwith implement fully" (para. 2), the 1953 recommendations - following the lead of earlier recommendations and resolutions - discussed at some length the kinds of detail considered desirable in the collection of statistics on migration. Migrants are to be classified as residents or non-residents, visitors, or members of any of a number of other categories (e.g., refugees) "to which special interest attaches at a given time" (para. 17). They are to be further classified as "permanent" or "temporary" (on the basis of declared intention as to duration of stay - except with returning residents, of course); and it is further recommended in these 1953 recommendations that, where desirable, visitors (both those arriving and those departing) be sub-categorized into five (presumably separate) groups: (a) in transit, (b) on holiday, (c) travelling for educational purposes, (d) on business, and (e) other.

20. The minimum of desirable information to be collected on "permanent" immigrants, according to these 1953 recommendations, consists of: (a) date of crossing of frontier, (b) legal nationality, (c) country of birth, (d) sex, (e) age, (f) usual occupation and usual employment status (i.e., employer, employee, own account worker etc.), (g) country of last permanent residence (if arrival) or intended residence (if departure), (h) intended duration of stay (if arrival) or length of present stay (if departing temporary migrant). The recommendations also note the usefulness of information on a variety of other matters, such as marital status, literacy and amount of formal schooling, though these items are not included in the basic minimum.

B. Need for revision of the United Nations recommendations

21. The number and detail of recommendations made concerning statistical data on international migration clearly attests to the significance that attaches to this kind of information. Yet these recommendations have, themselves, been largely ignored in practice, and the collection of migration data (by the means recommended, that is, border statistics), as already noted, has been marked by a multiplicity of definitions and practices. Of those countries collecting information on border crossings, many collect it only on arrivals, and a few only on departures.

Frequently, there is no attempt to separate long- from short-term migrants; and in many instances, there is no separation made between returning nationals or residents and other arrivals. In addition, there are numerous disparities with respect to coverage: a large number of countries make one or more exclusions on the basis of such items as immigrants' country of origin, the destination of emigrants, duration of stay, means of transport, purpose of move, nationality, port of entry or departure, and even sex.

22. This multiplicity of definitions and practices attending the collection of migration data attests not only to a considerable variety in the national interests presumed to be served by such data but also strongly suggests that the collection of migration data on any comprehensive accurate, and internationally comparable basis by means of statistics on border crossings will be extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible - even with the extensive use of sampling.

23. The need is, thus, for realistic international recommendations on this subject; recommendations of definitions and procedures that will: (1) yield useful information, (2) be flexible enough to apply to individual countries' needs for different types of information, and (3) offer some hope of being put into practice.

III. CONSIDERATIONS FOR A REVISION OF THE UNITED NATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION STATISTICS

24. Ideally, data on international migration would - at the very least - distinguish arrivals from departures and then, within each of these two categories, further distinguish residents from non-residents. Additional detail would - still under ideal conditions - differentiate between "long-term" and "short-term" (or "permanent" and "temporary") movement; categorize migrants (in detail sufficient for planning purposes) by reasons for movement and by individual attributes, such as age, sex, marital status, level of schooling completed, race or ethnic origin, household composition, and usual occupation; distinguish seasonal migrants and tourists; and distinguish frontier traffic to the degree necessary both for planning purposes and for excluding statistics on this group from those on the migrant population itself.

25. This is the ideal system, the system outlined in the 1953 recommendations. These 1953 recommendations remain a worthwhile goal. Countries currently following these recommendations should

be encouraged to continue doing so and to work to improve on the accuracy and completeness of the data thus collected. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that any realistic recommendations must accord with national interests and with actual possibilities for the collection of data - and this the 1953 recommendations have generally failed to do.

A. Elements of a realistic system of data collection

26. A realistic system for the collection of data on migration would be based, first, on recognition of the general impossibility of collecting accurate, comprehensive data on emigration, at least by direct measures. Only where work permits are required for all migrants does registration offer the possibility of yielding any direct information on those who have departed, while frontier statistics on emigration are apt to be particularly unreliable. Only if the nation concerned is an island (and with few ports of entry - and those ports heavily policed) or one that maintains close surveillance over its borders can frontier statistics be relied on with any degree of confidence in the result. And even then, as is shown, for example, by the illegal and sizable migration of Mexican "wetbacks" into the United States, there is always the possibility that restrictions will be circumvented.

27. Frontier statistics on emigrants are probably a bit more reliable in instances of well-organized movement, and possibly, also, with certain highly regular and predictable seasonal movements. But in the general case, they would also appear to be subject to error, and particularly to omissions, to warrant recommendation as a major source of data on outward mobility.

28. The best hope of obtaining information on a country's emigrants would seem to lie in culling it from other countries' data on immigrants (assuming these data to be tabulated by country of birth or last residence). This is a particularly promising technique for countries whose emigrant flows are concentrated: Puerto Rico's to the United States mainland, or Western Samoa's and the Cook Islands' to New Zealand, for example. There is with such a procedure the usual problem of accuracy and completeness,

of course - especially when borders are relatively open, or when there are several points of entry. There is, also, the further possibility of problems arising in differences in definitions or procedures, which is why the method is better suited to countries with concentrated emigrant flows, for the more numerous the countries of immigration, the greater the likely number of differences in definitions and procedures.

29. As will be discussed below, there is also the possibility of obtaining information on emigration from the analysis of data from two or more separate field inquiries. Information of this sort would, however, be restricted to net movements, and be derived indirectly rather than directly.

30. In addition to recognizing the limitations on the collection of data on emigration, a realistic system for the collection of migration data would, secondly, be geared both to individual countries' needs for this information, and to the facilities and resources these countries have for collecting and processing it. Few governments are going to collect data for which they perceive no use to themselves; while, however willing, none is going to collect data accurate and comprehensive enough to be of any very significant use unless it has the requisite resources and facilities for doing so. Little is to be gained either by asking the impossible or by encouraging governments to allocate resources to a task of doubtful utility to themselves. The aim with respect to migration data is the same as with all other kinds of data: obtain the most useful information in the shortest time and at the least cost. If this can be accomplished in a way that permits some degree of international comparison and scientific analysis - and it usually can - that is, of course, all to the good, and something that should be of particular concern in the formulation of international recommendations; but the ultimate determinants of a country's data-collection activities will be its government's perception of its needs and the resources it can bring to the task. Any realistic international standards must be based on a recognition of this fact.

31. A third element of a realistic system for the collection of migration data is that such a system would rely mainly on field inquiries rather than on either frontier statistics or registration. Statistics on border crossings have their uses, which have already been touched upon, but data of this sort are generally too subject to inaccuracies and omissions to be relied upon as the sole or even the major source of information on international movements. Sizable errors have been found even in the statistics of countries that ostensibly exercise considerable care in recording migratory movements across their borders. For example,

"According to the statistics of the main European countries to which Italians migrated, the net intake of Italian immigrants during 1960-66 was over 700,000. In contrast, the net emigration from Italy to all European countries during this period, based on Italian data, was only 445,000. About two-thirds of this discrepancy was accounted for by the differing figures of the Federal Republic of Germany and Italy on the volume of migration between those countries....The German data also show a net immigration from several countries of Western Europe (for example, Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands), but the statistics for these countries differ considerably from those for Germany, and in some cases even the direction of the net movement is in dispute.

"The tendency toward exaggeration in the count of immigrants, and/or under-reporting of emigrants, which is suggested by the data, may result in part from the natural wish of the emigrating worker to protect his social security and other benefits in his home country by conveying to the authorities an expectation of early return; at the same time he may seek to enhance his status in the country of destination by indicating the likelihood of a lengthy or permanent stay. Moreover, frequent visits to the home country of varying duration, made possible by the short distances involved, further complicate the statistical accounting". 6/

6/ Edith Adams, "International Migration Trends Affecting Europe in the 1960s, International Population Conference, 1969 volume IV (Liège, International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, 1971), p. 2540.

32. Despite their limitations, however, frontier statistics do offer virtually the only possibility for obtaining information on certain types of short-term movers: tourists, business travellers, and health-seekers, for example; and they offer - to some countries, and at least theoretically, if not actually, to all countries - the possibility of collecting the widest variety of information on emigrants. It is, in fact, the theoretical possibilities for data collection inherent in this method that accounts for its being the only one discussed and recommended in the 1953 recommendations. ^{7/} As pointed out, however, the method has fallen far short of these expectations in practice and, moreover, it is now recognized that there are other, seemingly more promising and practical, possibilities for the collection of data on the major migratory movements - emigration as well as immigration.

33. What, then, of registration as a source of migration data? There is considerable interest in this technique, particularly with respect to what it would seem to offer for the measurement of labour mobility in Europe. The technique has been applied with apparent success in a certain number of countries: The Netherlands, Sweden, and Denmark, for example.

34. If a country admits individuals only on possession of a work permit, there is - at least in theory - the possibility with a registration system of obtaining information on both short-term and long-term migrants, and on those departing as well as those entering. The registration technique would appear in general to be best suited to a small, highly cohesive or heavily policed society; and to the collection of data on certain readily distinguishable groups living or working in relative isolation,

^{7/} Expanded use of the landing card now filled out by international air travellers offers a convenient means of acquiring frontier statistics on at least a portion of the migrating population. The number of questions of these cards could be increased, the questions themselves made more comparable among the various countries, and the inquiry extended to include not only arrivals, as the practice is now, but also departures. The person to whom this method of inquiry would apply cannot be presumed to be representative of the total migrating population, however. At best, the method could yield useful information on a certain category of migrants (presumably those travelling mainly on a short-term basis for business purposes); it is unsuited either to measuring the total amount of migration or to estimating the characteristics of the migrating population, in general.

such as miners, academics, members of minority colour groups, or highly specialized scientific research workers: groups concerning which, incidentally, there is frequently considerable interest from the standpoint of analyses of the "brain drain", the industrial concentration of foreign workers, or problems of acculturation and race prejudice.

35. However, again in the general case, the likelihood of inaccuracy and, particularly, of under-registration would appear to be considerable. Whether the responsibility for being registered rests with the migrant or with someone else - such as an employer - there is ample opportunity in the application of this technique for the play of honest forgetfulness or even outright dishonesty, particularly if registration could entail some further obligation (conscription or taxation, for example, or - in the case of an employer - payment of a minimum wage or social security or medical benefit premium it was hoped could be avoided by the importation of foreign labor). The occasional newspaper accounts of discoveries of illegally employed migrants in various countries, and the frequently stated reluctance of employers to accept responsibility for registering foreign workers, suggest some of the limitations to the effectiveness of registration. Reliance upon registration as a source of data - at least of data pertaining to the whole of the immigrant population - would seem to require at the very minimum an uncommonly high level of either social cohesion or police surveillance.

B. The usefulness of field inquiries

36. We now turn to the third source of migration data: field inquiries. These may be conducted by sampling or they may strive for complete coverage, as is the case with those of them that qualify as censuses; and they may be continuous or restricted to a single occasion. Moreover, field inquiries can be used by themselves or as a supplement to frontier or registration data: even countries with purportedly good border statistics use sample surveys to gather supplementary data on such matters pertaining to immigrants as personal adjustment, labour force activity, and fertility. In contrast with the possibilities inherent in registration data, field inquiries also offer the possibility of gathering extensive detail on individuals.

37. There are two particular advantages to the field inquiry method. First of all, in contrast with the collection of statistics on border crossings, one can with a field inquiry simultaneously collect data on internal, as well as international, migration - and, as noted, do so in a way that provides considerable detail on individuals. Second, the field inquiry method, particularly in the form of census-taking, is already in nearly universal use and its extension to the collection of data on migration can be carried out with but a minimal additional expenditure of time and money, and no expansion of the administrative apparatus for census-taking.

38. The application of this technique depends only upon establishing where a person was living at two points in time: the date of the inquiry and some date previous to it. A number of countries have made such inquiry on their censuses (15 did so during the 1960 round of censuses and presumably more will have done so by completion of the 1970 round); and several have included a similar inquiry in their periodic sample surveys (e.g., Greece, Japan, the United States, and Uruguay). The United States' Current Population Survey has, in fact, been collecting this information ever since 1948. ^{8/} In addition, many more countries could obtain this information by appropriate cross-tabulation of those data in their censuses and sample surveys that relate to duration of present residence and place of previous residence.

39. The interval of time used in any particular field inquiry would be determined by the needs of the country. Particularly for a decennial or quinquennial census, a five-year interval would appear to be both short enough to minimize the effects of forgetfulness and long enough to minimize those of fluctuations occurring over shorter periods. Yet if it is the short-run fluctuations that are deemed important, an interval of, say, one year could be selected (or added to the five-year interval), particularly if the means of inquiry is a periodic sample survey.

40. With "migrants" thus distinguished from "non-migrants", it is possible to calculate net immigration from various countries

^{8/} United States Bureau of the Census, "Mobility of the Population of the United States: March 1970 to March 1971" Current Population Reports, Series p-20, No. 235 (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972).

(and also both net immigration and net emigration among the various enumeration districts or regions within a country) during the period under consideration. It is possible also to make comparisons between migrants and non-migrants with respect to individual characteristics - age, marital status, residence, occupation etc. - the number and variety of these characteristics being limited only by the scope of the inquiry. Where both birthplace and residence at some prior date are obtained (and this would seem to be the usual situation), it is possible to obtain information on return migration of earlier emigrants.

41. Moreover, among countries applying essentially the same definitions as to time period, locality, personal characteristics etc., and also conducting their inquiries on essentially the same date, it is possible with this method to obtain detailed information on the number and characteristics of those emigrating as well as those immigrating. The widespread application of United Nations recommendations on censuses and sample surveys would, of course, greatly facilitate this more extensive utilization of migration data acquired by means of field inquiries; as would, also, the enactment of agreements as to coverage and the timing of data collection on the part of countries between which migration is extensive. Even without such agreements, however, the fact that most countries conduct their censuses in years ending in either 0 or 1 - and that their data on migrants are, therefore, fairly closely coordinated temporally - holds out at least the possibility of using field-inquiry data to make close estimates of the volume and character of emigration.

42. The advantages of the field-inquiry method over others for collecting migration data are numerous. It has already been noted that this method can provide far more information on individual attributes than could be expected to be obtained by either registration or the collection of border statistics. Yet it entails no increase in border formalities and would appear in no way to retard or discourage migratory movement. It is reasonable to suppose, also, that migration data thus acquired - both information on personal characteristics of migrants, and that on the direction and rate of net movement - would be of superior quality to most data of this kind obtained by other means. This one would expect from the different nature of the undertaking: from, for example,

the type of personnel involved in collecting this information, the opportunities for training and supervising them, the absence of any requirement upon these persons to perform other (possibly competing) duties, and the probably greater co-operation on the part of the respondents as a result of the presumed importance and general acceptance of the ends to be served by the other kinds of data collected at the same time or in the same manner and under the same auspices.

43. The method is also relatively inexpensive - and certainly less expensive than either of the other two methods of collecting data on migration, that is, border collection and registration. Not only do most countries now conduct population censuses, but many also conduct sample surveys, and do so on a fairly regular basis. Obtaining information on migration by means of field surveys would thus in most instances require little more than the addition of a question or two to a census or sample survey schedule already in use or intended for use.

44. Finally, the field survey method provides data suitable for use in the "balancing equation", namely:

$$P_1 = P_0 + B - D + I - E, \text{ where:}$$

P_1 = population at time X

P_0 = population at time X-n

B = sum of births occurring during interval n

D = sum of deaths occurring during interval n

I = sum of immigrants arriving during interval n

E = sum of emigrants departing during interval n

This suitability for use in the balancing equation permits a fuller evaluation of the accuracy and completeness of the data derived in this fashion and also offers the chance to obtain detailed information on the number and characteristics of those departing from a country or region during the time period under

consideration. Registration statistics do not ordinarily offer the possibility of collecting information on emigrants; and while frontier statistics do offer such a possibility - and for collecting such data directly rather than indirectly as with the balancing equation approach outlined above - they have seldom produced information on this topic that was reliable and comprehensive enough to be of much use. That field-inquiry data - particularly with their predictably higher level of accuracy and completeness - can be used in this fashion should prove an increasingly important encouragement to their greater utilization as a source of information on migration.

45. For example, suppose that two field inquiries, one conducted in 1965 and the other in 1970, find the following distributions of men in the age cohort 25-29 in 1965:

<u>Ages 25-29</u> <u>in 1965</u>		<u>Ages 30-34</u> <u>in 1970</u>	
Native-born	9,000	Native born	
		Resident in country in	
		1965	8,500
		Resident abroad in	
		1965	700
Foreign-born	1,000	Foreign-born	
		Resident in country in	
		1965	800
		Resident abroad in	
		1965	1,000
Total	10,000		11,000

As births do not figure in the changes that have occurred, account need be taken in this instance only of the effects of migration and mortality. With respect to mortality, it is possible to make a number of different assumptions, but the differences in their results will be minimal. For convenience, therefore,

let us assume a zero mortality among those either immigrating or emigrating and a rate of mortality among the foreign-born during the five-year period identical to that among the native-born. Applying life table q_x values thus yields the following estimated losses from death during the period: 72 among the 9,000 native-born resident in 1965 and 8 among the 1,000 foreign-born resident in 1965. Inserting these values in the balancing equation for each category produces the following for the changes occurring during the five-year period, 1965-1970:

	<u>1970</u> <u>popu-</u> <u>lation</u>	<u>1965</u> <u>popu-</u> <u>lation</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>births</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>deaths</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>immi-</u> <u>grants</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>emi-</u> <u>grants</u>
1. Net emigration of native-born persons resident in country	9000	- 8500	+ 0	- 72	+ 0	- <u>428</u>
2. Net return immigration of native-born persons non-resident in country in 1965	700	- 0	+ 0	- 0	+ <u>700</u>	- 0
3. Net emigration of foreign-born persons resident in country in 1965	800	- 1000	+ 0	- 8	+ 0	- <u>192</u>
4. Net immigration of foreign-born persons non-resident in country in 1965	1000	- 0	+ 0	- 0	+ <u>1000</u>	- 0

46. The balancing equation can be used in similar fashion for assessing migration involving occupational or industrial groupings, or, in fact, for any grouping differentiated in the inquiry.

47. The field-inquiry method is not without some drawbacks. As these

are discussed in detail elsewhere, ^{9/} they will be little more than mentioned here.

48. There is, for example, the usual problem of achieving accuracy and completeness. As already noted, however, this is not likely to be as intractable with field inquiries as with registration or the collection of information on border crossings; and, moreover, there are with field inquiries greater possibilities for the application of internal and external checks for assessing the quality of the returns. ^{10/}

49.. There is the further problem posed by the need for a precise delineation of the population under study: whether it is to comprise all those actually present in a given area at a given time (the de facto concept) or, instead, those who "belong" to the area at the time by virtue of legal residence, usual residence, or some other criterion (the de jure concept) - or some combination of the two. Problems can arise with persons who, though they may have been for some time at the place where they are enumerated, do not consider themselves to be residents of this place because they intend eventually to return to their previous residence; and also with persons who have left the country temporarily but are expected to return after some time. Where the migrant has moved only a short distance - as is frequently the case with migration in Europe and Africa - or where transportation to the country of origin is readily available - as is the case between the United States and both Canada and Puerto Rico - the possibility of frequent visits to the "home" country can further

^{9/} Handbook of Population Census Methods (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 58.XVII.6), (Vol. I, II, III); Handbook of Population and Housing Census Methods. Part VI, Sampling in Connexion with Population and Housing Censuses (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.70.XVII.9); Methodology of Demographic Sample Surveys (United Nations publications, Sales No.: E.71.XVII.11).

^{10/} A. J. Jaffe, Handbook of Statistical Methods for Demographers (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951); Manuals on Methods of Estimating Population. Manual II, Methods of Appraisal of Quality of Basic Data for Population Estimates (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 56.XIII.2) and Manual IV, Methods of Estimating Basic Demographic Measures from Incomplete Data (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 67.XIII.2); Henry S. Siegel, and Associates, The Methods and Materials of Demography (Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971).

blur the respondent's view of the extent to which migration has actually taken place. In fact, it may be that the possibility of moving without severing one's ties with the home country is itself an inducement to greater international mobility: the individual can all the more easily decide to migrate (in a demographic sense) to the extent that, in making this decision, it is unnecessary for him to take the seemingly more extreme step of defining himself as a migrant.

50. National needs and practices vary. Though most sample surveys pertain to the de facto population, a number of national censuses adhere to the de jure concept. One cannot, therefore, expect universal conformity to any common international standard concerning coverage. For this reason, the presentation of data should be accompanied by a description of the procedures followed that will clearly show the disposition of those groups occupying "marginal" positions with respect to the definition of migration: nomads, tourists, students, seasonal workers, military and diplomatic personnel etc. In addition, clearly stated time-limits of presence in, or absence from, a particular place must be established (in accordance with the needs for data and the prevailing circumstances in the country) to determine whether the person is or is not "usually resident" there. Of course, any period - a month, three months, a year, two years - is going to involve some degree of error, either of exclusion or inclusion. But the dependence of frontier statistics on personal statements of intent (in answer to some such question as: "How long do you intend to stay?") seems unlikely to be subject to any less error. It is simply that the source of error will be different: migrants can fail to adhere to their stated intentions; intending visitors can become immigrants, and vice versa. Once again, what solution there is to the problem would seem to lie in trimming the inquiry to the conditions and needs of the country undertaking it, while simultaneously collecting data in a manner that will also permit tabulation in conformity with a possible international standard.

51. The field-inquiry method yields no direct information on the number or characteristics of emigrants. Only frontier collection offers much opportunity for this. Nevertheless, as already noted, the fact that survey data lend themselves to use in the balancing equation does hold out at least the possibility of indirectly obtaining emigration data, and, moreover, there is with survey data at least the hope of getting reliable and useful information on a

country's emigrants from data collected by other countries on their immigrants.

52. Information on seasonal migration, or on short-term fluctuations, can be obtained by means of the field-inquiry method only with surveys repeated at regular and frequent intervals. Although much useful information can be obtained from surveys inquiring no further into migration than to ask where a person resided one year earlier; this type of inquiry will not yield much information on seasonal or short-run fluctuations. To obtain information on this latter kind of movement, field-inquiry data could be supplemented with data collected at border crossings. Such a procedure is, of course, practicable only to the extent that the amount and type of errors involved in the collection of data on border crossings can either be determined for the different portions of the period under consideration, or else assumed to be essentially the same throughout it: a process of evaluation in which survey data would be particularly useful.

53. A final limitation on the field-inquiry method of collecting migration data relates to sample size. Ordinarily, one could expect that a survey would need to be quite large in order for it to include enough immigrants to permit any assurance of statistical validity in the tabulations resulting from it. But the problem is not altogether unsolvable.

54. One possibility is to enlarge the size of the sample and then ask only a very limited number of questions of the non-immigrants in order to focus the major effort on the immigrants. This is a common procedure in sample surveys, and one that can frequently be carried out with little additional expense. It does involve casting a rather wide net for a frequently small catch, however.

55. Another possible solution is to add the results of several inquiries taken over a period of relatively short duration - say, one year. Many countries already conduct such surveys on a regular basis (i.e., several times a year) to inquire about employment, housing, cost of living, fertility, and the like; so the extension of these surveys into the field of migration statistics should occasion no very great change in procedure. All that it would involve is simply the addition of the questions on migration to each survey, whatever that survey's primary purpose. In most instances, this could be done at virtually no additional cost by adding but one question concerning place of residence at some previous date. The method is applicable, of course, only where the different surveys involve different samples. Where the survey series is of the "panel" variety - that is, where, it consists of repeated inquiries addressed to the same set of

respondents - the results are not additive. 11/

56. There is, of course, the possibility that immigrants will be considered an important enough element in the population to justify some effort to gather information about them, and yet be too few in number to justify application of either of these two approaches to the problem of sample size. In such instances, the presumed importance of immigrants (or of a group of immigrants) will probably be occasioned by their concentration, either in certain occupations or industries, or in certain districts where they are able to exert noticeable political or economic influence. In such cases of concentration, a more efficient and less costly method of collecting data on immigrants would consist of conducting special surveys or other inquiries of a geographically or occupationally restricted nature.

IV. REVISED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION STATISTICS

57. The recommendations set forth below are a suggested revision of those adopted in 1953 for the improvement of international migration statistics. 12/ They represent an attempt to provide realistic, practical guidelines for obtaining the most necessary data on international migration in a form that, while primarily geared to national needs and conditions, will none the less make clear at least the major dimensions and patterns of migration at the world level, as well.

58. There are advantages for individual governments in having detailed standards and definitions for demographic statistics developed as far as possible by international organizations, particularly if there is to be any international comparability of statistics. International comparability is, itself, desirable because of what it offers as a means of checking on the accuracy of different countries' statistics on the same phenomenon (international migration or trade, for example) and also - perhaps more importantly - because of the need for comparable data in making international comparisons and scientific analyses.

11/ United Nations recommendations on sampling can be found in the following publications: Handbook of Population and Housing Census Methods, part VI, op. cit.; Handbook of Household Surveys, (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 64.XVII.13); Methodology of Demographic Sample Surveys (United Nations publications, Sales No.: 64.XVII.13); Methodology of Demographic Sample Surveys (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.71.XVII.11).

12/ International Migration Statistics, chap. II, (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 53.XVII.10).

59. However, there are in specific instances always limits to the degree to which international recommendations can be - or will be - adhered to at the national level. Nowhere, perhaps, is this better illustrated than with respect to international migration. For one thing, nations display a variety of social and economic conditions, with a resultant variety, as well, in national needs for data. For another, there are great differences among countries in the level to which their data-collection procedures have developed. Many countries lack the organization and resources necessary for collection of even the most basic demographic data on total numbers, births and deaths - let alone the capacity to collect data on migration. In addition, because there are very considerable differences among countries in the numbers of migrants arriving or departing, in the rate of this migration, and in the personal characteristics of migrants, there are also very considerable differences among countries in the demographic, economic, and social significance to them of the migration they experience.

A. Recommendations at the highest level of generality

60. None the less, despite these differences, some international recommendations would seem appropriate - at least so far as matters at the highest level of generality are concerned: (1) accuracy and completeness of coverage should always be striven for, of course; and (2) techniques for the assessment of these two attributes should always be built into the design of data-collection and processing procedures wherever possible. Similarly, (3) data should be collected on a regular basis, whatever the means used, in order to permit comparisons over time. (4) The definitions and nomenclatures used in the collection and tabulation of statistics on migration should correspond to those used in other collections of data - on vital events, the labour force, schooling and school attendance, for example - in order that migration data may be co-ordinated with these other kinds of data both for analytical purposes and for making external checks on accuracy and completeness. (5) Finally, for analytical purposes and external checking, it is also desirable that use be made of identical time periods: that is, that data from different sources relate to the same years, the same seasons, the same durations of time. Though there may be differences in detail, the data collected should be in a form that permits making at least the same basic set of analyses by time for each of the different types of data. For example, a fiscal-year basis should not be used in collection of one set of data and a calendar year of another, unless a more detailed categorization by months is made available to enable alignment of the one set of data with the other

to enable alignment of the one set of data with the order.

B. Recommendations at a lower level of generality

61. It is possible to make other recommendations at a lower level of generality; though here it must be recognized that some countries may find it difficult or impossible to follow certain of these recommendations, while others, whatever their ability to follow them, may consider it to their interest to reject them in favour of other procedures and policies. It should also be recognized that the recommendations set forth here are offered as a guide merely to a desirable minimum. They are not intended to preclude more detailed or extensive programmes of data collection.

62. It is recommended, first, that those countries now collecting statistics on border crossings continue doing so; but that they strive to improve on the accuracy and completeness of this collection and, to this end, that they undertake studies necessary to assess the quality of the information obtained.

63. It is recommended, further, that the basic information on migration be obtained by means of field inquiries: that is, censuses and sample surveys, but particularly censuses. Even where migration data are now obtained by means of frontier collection, it is recommended that field inquiries be relied on as the major source of migration data.

64. It is recognized that the field-inquiry method is not suited to the collection of information on every type of migrant or migratory movement; that in some instances it may be desirable to supplement a census or sample survey with the collection of data through frontier control, despite the numerous inadequacies in this latter technique, particularly for countries with long land frontiers. It is also recognized that some few countries have established population registers from which it has been possible to extract satisfactory information on migration. The emphasis placed here on collecting data by means of field inquiries should not be construed as intended to discourage countries that have succeeded in obtaining satisfactory migration statistics by other means.

65. The field-inquiry method is recommended here because it is the method generally most likely to yield accurate and comprehensive data of the widest utility and at the least cost in both time and money and also because it can produce data on internal as well as international migration. It is recommended that information on migration be collected as part of a country's regular programme of census-taking and sample surveys, rather than through a wholly separate inquiry. This will reduce costs and, through co-ordination with other data collected on the same inquiry or series of inquiries, enable development of the greatest amount of information on the characteristics of those who have migrated.

66. The questions to distinguish migrants from non-migrants should relate, first, to birthplace and, second, to place of residence at some time in the past. As birthplace is a universal census item, the procedure involves the addition of but one question to the schedule. It is recommended that first priority be given to an interval of five years on census inquiries and - because of their presumably greater frequency and also because of the presumably higher volume of the internal movement they would be more directly concerned with - to an interval of one year on intercensal sample surveys. A five-year interval for censuses ought to be long enough to minimize the fluctuations that occur over shorter durations, and yet not so long that the respondent is likely to have forgotten. If information on shorter durations is sought through the census, it is recommended that the question to elicit this information be in addition to, rather than a substitution for, that referring to the five-year interval. This way, the possibility of making international comparisons on the basis of a five-year interval will be retained. Presentation of the results of any such inquiry should, of course, specify the time interval referred to.

67. The data recommended here for collection permit differentiation between "permanent" and "temporary" migrants only on the basis of residuals; for it is not recommended that a statement of intent - which is so subject to change - be recorded as part of a field inquiry. Any foreign-born person resident in a given country at both the time of inquiry and five years earlier can be assumed to be a permanent resident, even though there may have been an intervening move during the period. If it is desired that "permanency" be defined, instead, in terms of a two- or one-year

interval (the one-year interval is the one recommended in the 1953 recommendations; the two-year interval is currently used by certain immigrant-receiving countries, such as Australia), the enumeration schedule can be amended accordingly. The amount and character of "temporary" migration can be estimated either from data on border crossings (in which intended duration of residence is inquired into), or from data collected from employers or in special inquiries geographically limited in scope.

68. Concerning various "marginal" groups, it is recommended that the category, "migrant", exclude those involved in frontier traffic, that is, the frequent movement across borders of persons residing in frontier areas. As such persons are ordinarily authorized to use simplified travel documents, it is recommended that the volume of this traffic, where desired, be estimated on some such basis as the number of frontier cards issued, the number of special season tickets, or counts of in- or out-crossings of the frontier by holders of frontier cards. The basis for the estimate should, of course, be stated in each case.

69. It is further recommended with respect to "marginal" groups that the "migrant" category also exclude tourists and other visitors. Information on such movements can, on occasion, be of considerable use. But this type of movement is basically different from other movements involving a border crossing; and, moreover, the kinds of data particularly pertinent to it are more appropriately and efficiently obtained from accommodation establishments and cruise ships.

70. As first proposed by the United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism (Rome, 1963), and accepted by the Statistical Commission at its fifteenth session (1968), 13/ a "visitor" is "any person visiting a country other than that

13/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-fourth Session. Supplement No. 10, para. 152.

in which he has his usual place of residence, for any reason other than following an occupation remunerated from within the country visited". ^{14/} This definition includes the following categories of non-residents:

"(a) Persons visiting the country for less than one year, specifically for purposes of recreation or holiday, medical care, religious observances, family affairs, participation in international sports events, conference and other meetings, and study tours or other student programmes;

"(b) Crew members of foreign vessels or aircraft docked or on lay-over in the country;

"(c) Foreign commercial (business) travellers who are to be in the country for less than one year; and foreigners who are the employees of non-resident enterprises and who have come to the country for less than one year for purposes of installing machinery or equipment purchased from their employer;...

"(e) Official diplomatic and consular representatives and members of the armed forces of a foreign country who are stationed in the country;

"(f) Employees of international bodies who are not citizens of the country and are on a mission of less than one year's duration". ^{15/}

71. Seasonal workers, that is, persons who are, and will be, in the given country explicitly for purposes of seasonal employment only, are excluded from this definition of "visitor". Whether actually holding a job or looking for one, it is recommended that such persons (and their accompanying family members) be included in the population of "migrants".

72. Information on the movement of seasonal workers can be obtained in the recommended fashion by means of periodic sample

^{14/} Guidelines for Tourism Statistics (United Nations publication Sales No.: E.71.II.D-9) para. 25.

^{15/} Ibid. para. 27.

surveys or, where such workers are geographically or industrially concentrated, by narrowly focussed special inquiries. Where resources and conditions permit, supplementary data on this movement may be obtained from frontier collections. However, only where there are but few points of entry - and movement at these points is carefully recorded - should frontier statistics be relied on as the major source of data on seasonal migration.

V. CONCLUSION

73. The Commission will undoubtedly wish to indicate its initial reactions to the above proposals and may wish to request that this document be circulated to countries for detailed comments so that a draft revision of the 1953 recommendations may be presented to the Commission at its eighteenth session.