

UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

E/CN.3/484  
25 June 1976

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

STATISTICAL COMMISSION  
Nineteenth session  
New Delhi, 8-19 November 1976  
Item 6 (b) of the provisional agenda

SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

MIGRATION STATISTICS

Statistics of internal migration

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

At its seventeenth session, the Statistical Commission considered proposals for guidelines on statistics of internal migration and recommended the preparation of a study of national practices relating to the statistics, to be used as a basis for possible international guidelines.

The present document sets forth provisional results of the study and some conclusions that the Commission may wish to call to the attention of Governments. After a review of the stages in its development (paras. 1-2), the document very briefly considers the need for statistics of internal migration (paras. 4-6); explains how the study of national practices was conducted (paras. 7-8); sets forth the objectives of the present document (paras. 9-10); examines some national uses of data on internal migration (paras. 11-12), the definition of internal migration (paras. 13-31), sources of data (paras. 32-38) and national practices in their collection, tabulation and publication (paras. 39-45); and concludes with suggestions for improvements appropriate to the present stage of development of the national statistics (paras. 46-50).

The Commission may wish to request the Secretary-General to revise the document as appropriate, circulate it for the information of Member States and inform the Commission, at its twentieth session, if there are any considerable differences between the provisional and final results of the study of national practices.

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## INTRODUCTION

1. At its sixteenth session, the Statistical Commission, in reviewing the situation in regard to statistics of internal migration, expressed the opinion that "the collection of data on this topic might not yet be an appropriate subject for world-wide recommendations because of the diversity of regional and even of national situations." <sup>1/</sup> It recommended, however, that the subject be studied by the Secretariat with a view to convening a meeting of experts on the subject.

2. In lieu of a meeting, informal consultation was undertaken with selected experts in different regions. Proposals for the content of possible guidelines, based in part on the results of the consultations, were submitted to the Commission at its seventeenth session. In commenting on the proposals, the Commission stated its opinion that "the need for, and possibilities of, international comparability were not as great in the case of internal migration statistics as in that of international migration statistics. Internal migration was less a matter of international concern and the desired statistics would necessarily vary significantly from one country to another. Nevertheless, the sharing and distillation of national experience and views in the form of international guidelines would be of value to countries in developing their internal migration statistics." <sup>2/</sup> The Commission, therefore, recommended that a study of national practices be undertaken by the Secretariat and that revised proposals for guidelines should be based on the study. The present document has been prepared in accordance with that recommendation.

### I. ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

3. The Commission may wish to request the Secretary-General to:

(a) Revise the document, as required, in accordance with its discussion and with the final results of the study of national practices;

(b) Circulate the document, as modified, for the information of Member States;  
and

(c) If the final results of the study of national practices prove to be considerably different from the provisional results contained in the present document, bring them to the attention of the Commission, for comment, at its twentieth session.

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<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 2 (E/4938), para. 110.

<sup>2/</sup> Ibid., Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 2 (E/5236), para. 123.

## II. BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS

### A. Need for statistics of internal migration

4. As noted in document E/CN.3/483, also before the Commission, procedures for the collection and tabulation of migration statistics are the least developed and standardized compared to those for statistics of fertility and mortality - the two other components of population change. <sup>3/</sup> This situation results in a lack of reliable and timely information on population movements between countries (international migration) and within the same country (internal migration) and a lack of international comparability among national data.

5. Although, from a certain perspective, international migration and internal migration can be considered as different aspects of the same phenomenon, the types and sources of the data on these two kinds of migration and the techniques of analysis and estimation required for their study differ sufficiently to necessitate separate approaches to improvement of the statistics on each. United Nations recommendations on migration statistics have, in fact, dealt entirely with international migration. <sup>4/</sup> The present document is a first approach to possible standardization of statistics of internal migration.

6. Of the three components of population change, migration as a whole occurs most often and internal migration, even by the most restricted definition, far surpasses international migration in volume. The topic of internal movements includes a number of important but distinct aspects. One of the most important aspects at this time is the rapid urbanization, especially the growth in the size and number of large cities, being experienced in the developing countries. In some of the more developed countries, by contrast, rural areas and small towns are now showing signs of faster growth than larger urban localities. The causes of these changes, particularly the relative contributions of migration and differential fertility, warrant careful investigation as a prerequisite to estimating, and planning for, their consequences. But the movement of population within a country also has other aspects that are not necessarily connected with urban-rural migration and that may require different kinds of data for their measurement and even different collection practices. Among these are movement from economically depressed urban or rural areas to prosperous areas of the same kind, seasonal movements related to agricultural practices, nomadism, movement resulting from natural disasters and many movements incidental to business and recreation.

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<sup>3/</sup> See Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.73.XVII.9).

<sup>4/</sup> International Migration Statistics (United Nations publication, Sales No. 53.XVII.10), chap. II, "Recommendations for the improvement of international migration statistics"; and "Draft recommendations on statistics of international migration" (E/CN.3/483).

## B. Investigation of national practices

7. In an effort to determine national concepts of what constitutes internal migration and what are the prevailing national statistical practices in connexion with the investigation of internal migration, a questionnaire on national practices in the definition, collection, compilation and uses of internal migration statistics was circulated to national statistical offices in 1975 (see the annex to the present document). Detailed results of the investigation were set forth in three synoptic tables that were circulated for review by each national office in 1976. Because the national review and consequent amendment process were not yet completed at the time the present document was prepared, the summaries of the results presented herein are entirely provisional. Corrections received thus far, however, appear to supply additional information rather than change the drift of the original replies markedly.

8. Responses to the original request were received from 152 countries. Among them were 32 countries of Africa, 26 of North America, 12 of South America, 33 of Asia, 33 of Europe, 15 of Oceania and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Because the questionnaires for some of the countries were returned with numerous blanks, it seems likely that there was some difficulty in completing them. Hence, it is not possible to state with certainty exactly how many of the 152 responding countries actually have not investigated the phenomenon of internal migration at all. It can only be stated that at least 105 of the 152 have done so, among them being 20 countries of Africa, 20 of North America, 11 of South America, 18 of Asia, 25 of Europe, 10 of Oceania and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

## C. Objectives of the present document

9. The document has a twofold purpose. It is first an attempt to ascertain from the inquiry into national practices what common ground may exist among national definitions and practices in the collection of internal migration statistics upon which international standards could be based. Any realistic recommendations must reflect national requirements and the feasibility of collecting the data. They should provide definitions, specify the types of information to be collected and the methods to be used, and be flexible enough to yield useful information in accordance with various country needs. As will be seen in the remainder of the document, however, there is little uniformity among, and even within, countries, particularly in the definition of an internal migrant. National circumstances must dictate which internal movements are of most significance and merit priority of measurement. Not unreasonably, the precise definitions of a migrant may vary even within a single country as the attempt is made to measure different internal movements for different purposes, leading to the use of different migration-defining areas (see para. 17). Differences in the frequency with which data are collected, depending, in turn, upon the sources used, may necessitate the use of different time intervals of presence in a place, or absence from it, in determining if a movement in the recent past constituted migration. At the present time, therefore, precise recommendations cannot be made. Nevertheless, examination of national

practices reveals a tendency towards the use of certain elements in the national definitions and towards the collection of certain information about the characteristics of internal migrants, no matter how they are defined. These will be discussed further in the succeeding chapters.

10. The second objective of the document is to offer encouragement and assistance to Governments in their efforts to obtain statistics of internal migration. It is hoped that countries can benefit mutually from the summary of national practices contained herein and from the discussion of the elements of concepts used in national definitions.

### III. USES OF DATA ON INTERNAL MIGRATION

11. Of the 105 countries from which indications of the collection of statistics of internal migration were received, 84 responded to the request for information on national uses of the data. The provisional results seem to indicate that, at least up to the present, the most frequent use of internal migration data has been for the study of movements of population from rural to urban areas and/or from smaller to larger urban areas. Seventy-seven countries reported using the data for this purpose, while 52 countries indicated that data were used for the study of movements of population from economically depressed to prosperous areas; 46 countries used the data for the planning of public, community, recreational and social services, 23 countries utilized the data for the study of fertility patterns of migrants, 13 for the preparation of subnational estimates and/or projections of populations, six for the study of movements of population following natural disasters and three for development planning and policy making.

12. Table 1 shows the distribution by continent of countries reporting each use. The pattern of greatest emphasis on the study of rural-to-urban movement and of movement from smaller to larger urban areas is found throughout the world. Only among the countries of South America and Europe does the frequency of any other uses appear to be close to the first mentioned. It would appear, then, that this aspect of the internal movement of population receives more national attention than any other at this time.

Table 1. National uses of internal migration statistics, by continent  
 (Provisional results of an inquiry into national practices)

Continent	Number of countries reporting national uses a/	Number of countries using data for							
		Study of movements of population from rural to urban areas and/or from smaller to larger urban areas	Study of movements of population from economically depressed to prosperous areas	Planning of public, community, recreational and social services	Study of fertility patterns of migrants	Preparation of sub-national population estimates and/or projections	Study of movements of population following natural disasters	Development planning and policy-making	
Total	84	77	52	46	23	13	6	3	
Africa	17	15	8	6	5	1	-	1	
America, North	16	13	9	9	4	2	-	-	
America, South	7	6	5	5	3	1	1	-	
Asia	15	15	10	7	5	-	2	-	
Europe	20	19	18	15	4	8	2	-	
Oceania	8	8	2	3	2	1	1	2	
USSR	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	

a/ Because a number of countries reported using the data for more than one purpose, the figures in the first column are less than the sum of the remaining columns.

## IV. DEFINITION OF INTERNAL MIGRATION

13. The diverse nature of population movement in space and in time has been briefly described in Methods of Measuring Internal Migration. 5/ The pattern of movement may range, in space, from a few yards to thousands of miles and, in time (i.e., the duration of stay at a particular place), from a relatively few hours to many years. Much of this movement is incidental to the performance of daily or weekly routine, such as commuting to and from school or a place of work, taking livestock to pasturage or going to a market place. At the opposite extreme, the movement may cover long distances and terminate in a sustained or permanent stay at the place of destination. Between the extremes of space and time, routine movements may cover any distance and occur with considerable frequency, as with nomads and migrant workers who have no usual residence, or they may be part of a routine that occurs at several fixed intervals during a year, as is the case with semi-nomads and migrant workers who divide their time between fixed locations or with persons who maintain more than one residence and move between them for various purposes. Other movements involve a departure from routine, such as travel for holiday or business.

14. The concept of internal migration has often been restricted to those movements that involve a change of usual residence, hence excluding not only movement that is incidental to daily or slightly less frequent routine but also the moves of nomads and regular seasonal moves, whether or not they are connected with economic activity. This concept has been set forth, for example, in Methods of Measuring Internal Migration, 5/ which further restricts migration to refer to movement that involves a change of locality, in the sense of milieu. The manual points out that because neither change of locality nor change of milieu is readily amenable to objective measurement and the more objective measurement of distance is seldom recorded, and because migration statistics are necessarily tabulated for the administrative or political units into which a country is divided, "... migration is then operationally defined as a change of residence from one civil division to another ..." 5/

15. Such a definition appears to be comparable with the definition of long-term international migration proposed in document E/CN.3/483, except for the use of the undefined term "change of residence". It does not, however, offer any categories comparable with those of short-term international migrants or of nomads who sojourn in different countries for fairly fixed portions of a year. This would seem to imply that movements regarded as constituting migration when they involve the crossing of an international boundary do not constitute migration when any boundaries crossed are entirely internal. In the absence of any indication that short- and long-term internal movements have a different relationship to each other than that between short- and long-term international movements, it would appear that some kinds of short-term and some kinds of nomadic movement warrant consideration as aspects of internal migration.

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5/ Manuals on Methods of Estimating Population, Manual VI, Methods of Measuring Internal Migration (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.70.XIII.3), p. 1.



16. Consideration might also be given to the treatment of changes of residence within a small civil division, which may be of considerable interest for a variety of purposes. Information on movement from one neighbourhood to another within a locality may, for example, be extremely useful for community planning for utilities, transportation, home and business construction, recreation and local health services, particularly for large urban localities with distinct differences among their constituent neighbourhoods.

17. Another drawback of the definition quoted in paragraph 14 seems to be implicitly recognized in Methods of Measuring Internal Migration, where a slightly different terminology is proposed in an effort to "facilitate communication and exchange of knowledge regarding the phenomena ...". It then defines internal migration as "a move from one migration-defining area to another (or a move of some specified minimum distance) ... that involved a change of residence". 6/ The substitution of "migration-defining area" for "civil division" points up the need, in the collection and analysis of migration statistics, for a clear specification of the geographic area(s) into, or out of, which movement is to be measured. Unlike international migration statistics, which deal with movement across only one type of border, i.e., an international border, internal migration statistics may be concerned with a variety of types of borders, as people move among major and minor civil divisions, cities, towns, villages, municipios, arrondissements and other administrative units. A "migration-defining area" can, therefore, be any designated area or type of area. The term is not, therefore, definitional in itself but is only a concept that should form part of any definition applied. If, for example, the movement to be considered is that among all major civil divisions of a country, the "migration-defining area" is a major civil division. If, however, the movement is that into, or out of, each of several large urban localities, each of the localities will constitute a separate "migration-defining area" while the remainder of the country can be divided into whatever areas are appropriate to the purpose of the investigation.

18. It should also be borne in mind that the "migration-defining areas" used in the collection of the data need not be the same as those used in the ultimate tabulation. Data collected for the smallest civil or other divisions may be combined in any way desired for tabulation. In census investigations, in fact, the unit of in-migration can be the census enumeration area, although it is obviously not feasible to collect information on the enumeration area from which an in-migrant has come. Data from registers may be available for small areas of both in- and out-migration although regular tabulation of such detail is hardly to be expected.

19. Whether a change of usual residence is considered a necessary condition of internal migration in general or only of certain kinds of internal migration, the concept of change of residence will play an important role in the definition. A clear determination of what constitutes a change of residence is, therefore, needed. This, in turn, depends on the concept of usual residence. Just as it is considered important to define international migrants in terms of actual or intended periods of presence in, or absence from, a country, in an effort to avoid the lack of international comparability caused by national use of undefined terms or of varying

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6/ Ibid., p. 2.

criteria in the definition of a national resident (see E/CN.3/483, para. 39), so does it appear that the criterion of a minimum period of presence in, or absence from, a particular place within a country is necessary for consistency of identification of internal migrants. Consideration should also be given to whether the time criterion is to be applied only retrospectively or whether intention to stay or to be absent for a certain period is to be used in the same way as it is used in identifying international migrants.

20. Another time concept that affects particularly statistics of migrant flow is referred to in Methods of Measuring Internal Migration 6/ as the "migration interval", that is, the time period for which the data have been compiled. This may be a definite interval, for example, a specified calendar year, or 5 or 10 years; it may be the lifetime of each individual in the population, as when in-migrants are identified on the basis of place of birth; or it may be otherwise indefinite, as when the identification is made on the basis of any indication of a previous place of residence. 7/

21. For field inquiries, a further distinction can be made between the interval used in the collection of the data and that used in tabulation and analysis. The two intervals need not, of course, be the same but the interval used in the latter will be circumscribed by that used in the former. Where data are collected continuously through registration, there is no interval for the collection and the migration interval becomes relevant only to tabulation and analysis.

22. Of the 105 countries whose replies to the Statistical Office questionnaire indicated that they had investigated internal migration, only 59 supplied a definition of an internal migrant. Among the 59 were the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 80 per cent of the countries of Europe and Oceania represented in the figure of 105, but less than half of the countries of the remaining regions.

23. This comparatively poor response may in part reflect the fact that the collection of internal migration statistics is often not pursued with any regularity and definitions vary from one infrequent field inquiry to another, depending on the information being sought. There is, then, no single national definition. It was, in fact, apparent that some of the definitions applied only to a single field inquiry that might have been either the sole investigation of internal migration undertaken or the latest one. Unfortunately, no indication had been requested of whether the definition applied to the collection of the data or to the tabulated statistics. Hence, it is possible that, in some cases, the definitions referred to the detail used in collection even though results might have been tabulated in different detail.

24. The concepts used in the definitions are summarized, by continent, in table 2. Omitted from the table is the concept of change of residence as such because it appeared to be included, in one way or another, in every definition, either by direct mention of change, moving or a similar term, or by implication.

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7/ When in-migrants identified on the basis of place of birth or on the basis of any indication of a previous place of residence are conceived of as the stock of in-migrants at a fixed date, the concept of a migration interval is not relevant.

Table 2. Concepts included in national definitions of internal migrants, by continent  
 (Provisional results of an inquiry into national practices)

Continent	Number of countries reporting a definition	Number of definitions including the concept(s) of:						No criterion except moving or changing residence
		Migration-defining area only	Migration-defining area and migration interval	Migration-defining area and minimum period of presence or absence	Migration interval only	Minimum period of presence or absence only		
Total	59	21	13	3	8	6	8	
Africa	9	-	3	-	2	3	1	
America, North	8	3	2	1	1	-	1	
America, South	5	1	2	1	-	-	1	
Asia	8	2	1	-	2	2	1	
Europe	20	15	2	1	1	-	1	
Oceania	8	-	3	-	2	1	2	
USSR	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	

25. In total, 37 definitions specified a migration-defining area, 21 specified a migration interval and 9 specified a minimum period of presence in, or absence from, a particular place to be used as evidence of migration. In combination, 13 specified both a migration-defining area and a migration interval, 24 specified the former but not the latter, and 8 only the latter. Of the 9 definitions that indicated a time criterion of presence in, or absence from, a particular place to be used as evidence of migration, 3 also specified a migration-defining area but 6 had no further concept. Eight definitions included no criterion except moving or changing residence.

26. Table 3 summarizes, by continent, the migration-defining areas and migration intervals used in the relevant definitions. Of the 37 definitions specifying a migration-defining area, 8 used major civil divisions, 14 used minor civil divisions and 19 used localities, with 4 of the definitions specifying two different types of areas, and 1 specifying one type of area and indicating that another, unspecified type of area was also used.

27. Among the 21 definitions that included the concept of a migration interval, 10 used only the concept of "life-time" migrants, that is, persons living in a place different from their place of birth, 9 indicated that a fixed time interval was used exclusively, 1 used both the "life-time" concept and a difference between present and previous place of residence, and 1 used the "life-time" concept for one measurement and a fixed interval for another. The fixed time intervals specified were either one or five years, with two definitions using both time intervals, but 3 definitions simply mentioned that there was an interval without specifying what the interval was. It is interesting to note that the smallest proportion of countries including the concept of a migration interval was found in Europe, where the highest proportion of countries derive internal migration statistics from continuous registration.

28. Among the 9 definitions that mentioned a time criterion of presence or absence as evidence that a move constituted migration, the minimum time period varied from two months to one year, with 4 definitions specifying six months.

29. One indication that emerges from these provisional results of the inquiry into national definitions is that all of the reporting countries seem to have restricted their concept of internal migration to cover only changes of residence, with no consideration of temporary moves. A second indication is that the specified migration-defining areas were always civil divisions; there was no mention of intra-locality movement or of regional movement.

30. The only regional pattern to emerge is found among the countries of Europe, where there is a pronounced use of small (minor civil division and locality) migration-defining areas and the definition rarely includes either a migration interval or a minimum period of presence at, or absence from, a particular place. This pattern appears to be correlated with the predominant use of continuous registration as a source of migration statistics (see para. 37).

31. The small proportion of reporting countries in all other parts of the world and the diversity of definitions among them precludes any generalization about the concepts used. Perhaps the most significant observation that can be made is the small proportion of countries that supplied any definition at all in response to the inquiry.

Table 3. Migration-defining areas and migration intervals specified in national definitions of internal migrants, by continent

(Provisional results of an inquiry into national practices)

Continent	Migration-defining area				Migration interval		
	Number of countries reporting concept	Level of area specified		Number of countries reporting concept	Interval specified		
		Major civil division	Minor civil division		Locality	Since birth	Fixed interval
Total	37	8 <sup>a/b/</sup>	14 <sup>b/c/</sup>	19 <sup>a/c/</sup>	21	12 <sup>d/</sup>	10 <sup>d/</sup>
Africa	3	-	2	1 <sup>e/</sup>	5	4	1
America, North	6	2 <sup>a/</sup>	2	3 <sup>a/</sup>	3	2 <sup>d/</sup>	2 <sup>d/</sup>
America, South	4	1	-	3	2	2	-
Asia	3	2	-	1	3	2 <sup>f/</sup>	1
Europe	18	1 <sup>g/</sup>	9 <sup>c/g/</sup>	10 <sup>c/</sup>	3	-	3
Oceania	3	2 <sup>g/</sup>	1 <sup>g/</sup>	1	5	2	3
USSR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

<sup>a/</sup> Including one country using both major civil division and particular localities.

<sup>b/</sup> Including two countries using both major and minor civil division.

<sup>c/</sup> Including one country using both minor civil division and locality.

<sup>d/</sup> Including one country using both the interval since birth and a fixed interval.

<sup>e/</sup> Also using other, unspecified area.

<sup>f/</sup> Including one country also using a difference between present and previous place of residence.

<sup>g/</sup> Including one country using both major and minor civil division.

#### V. SOURCES OF DATA

32. The principal sources of data on internal migration are registration and field inquiry. The advantages and disadvantages of each of these mechanisms as sources of statistics of international migration have been discussed in document E/CN.3/483 (paras. 65-81), also before the Commission. Because their relative advantages in connexion with the two aspects of migration are very similar, only a few additional remarks need to be made in the present document.

33. Permanent population registers are likely to be better sources of statistics of internal than of international migration because changes of residence within a country are more likely to be reported than are departures from the country. Hence register statistics of out-migration from one area of a country to another are probably much more complete than those of emigration to another country. In contrast with field inquiries, continuous registration offers the possibility of the use of many migration intervals for tabulation and analysis of the data. It also may not require an explicit statement of the time period of presence in, or absence from, a particular place necessary to constitute migration because entrance into, or deletion from, a local register is in itself evidence of a period of presence in, or absence from, the register area and notification to a single national register may not have to be made until a given period of time after a move has taken place.

34. To the extent that permanent population registers contain local residence addresses, they may also be useful in studying movements of population within localities. For such local movements and also for movements across administrative borders, special registers (e.g. of school enrolment, of users of public utilities, of building permits) may also furnish at least rough indications of total movement.

35. Census or survey investigation of place of birth gives a relatively more complete indication of international than of internal migration because it identifies all of the foreign-born persons but it does not identify those among them who migrated within the country at least once after their arrival from abroad. The investigation of place of previous residence is more appropriate to internal migration because any previous residence within the country subsequent to immigration should be given in the response. A question on residence on a particular date in the past is equally suitable for the investigation of both types of migration, depending only on the detail required in the response.

36. Household sample surveys repeated at frequent intervals are probably more feasible for the collection of information on internal migration than for the collection of information on international immigration, because the greater numbers of internal migrants can be more adequately represented in relatively smaller samples.

Table 4. National sources of data on internal migration,  
 by continent  
 (Provisional results of an inquiry into national practices)

Continent	Number of countries reporting sources of data	Number of countries using		
		Field inquiries only	Registers only	Both field inquiries and registers
Total	103	71	11	21
Africa	20	17	-	3
America, North	19	14	1	4
America, South	10	8	-	2
Asia	18	14	-	4
Europe	25	8	10	7
Oceania	10	10	-	-
USSR	1	-	-	1

37. Table 4 summarizes, by continent, the information received from 103 countries on the sources of their data on internal migration. Of 20 African countries reporting, 17 relied exclusively on field inquiries and three used both field inquiries and registers. Of 19 countries of North America, 14 depended exclusively on field inquiries, one depended only on registration and four used both types of sources. Among 10 countries of South America, eight used field inquiries solely and two employed both field inquiries and registers. Among 18 Asian countries, field inquiries were used exclusively by 14 and both field inquiries and registers by four. The 10 reporting countries of Oceania employed field inquiries only. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics reported the use of both types of sources. The general pattern of predominant use of field inquiries with some additional employment of registers is sharply reversed among the European countries; out of a total of 25 reporting, 10 used registers exclusively, eight used field inquiries only and seven employed both types of sources.

38. Despite the predominant use of registers in Europe, however, certain information used in identifying migrants and information on some of their characteristics was reported to be obtained primarily through field inquiries. They were reported as the sole source of information on place of birth by 63 per cent of the European countries that collected data on place of birth, the sole source of data on duration of residence for 75 per cent of the cases, the only source of data on residence at a fixed date in the past for 85 per cent of the

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cases, the only source for data on occupation and on industry in 55 and 77 per cent of the cases, respectively, and the only source of information on number of children born alive in 86 per cent of the cases. It appears, then, that registers cannot, at present, always conveniently provide the kinds of data that are appropriate to the investigation of internal migration.

#### VI. COLLECTION, TABULATION AND PUBLICATION OF DATA ON CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERNAL MIGRANTS

39. The questionnaire circulated to national statistical offices asked about the collection, tabulation and publication of the geographic information used for identifying internal migrants (place of birth, place of previous residence, duration of residence and place of residence on a particular date in the past), information on the reason for the change (if any) of residence and information on particular characteristics of migrants (age, sex, marital status, occupation, industry, citizenship, national and/or ethnic group and number of children born alive). Countries were also asked to list any additional personal characteristics of migrants that were investigated.

40. Examination of the responses from 105 countries to the question on the collection of information needed for the identification of migrants reveals that considerably more countries obtained information that would identify life-time migrants or those during some other unspecified interval than obtained information that would identify migrants during a specified migration interval. Information on place of birth and on place of previous residence was collected respectively by approximately 85 and 70 per cent of the countries while only between 55 and 60 per cent collected information on duration of residence and residence on a fixed date in the past. Therefore, more countries would know from where their internal migrants came than when they migrated. Some slight regional variation from this pattern can be seen in table 5, which shows the number of countries collecting the information, by continent. Among the European countries, for example, place of previous residence was investigated more frequently than was place of birth and there were regional differences in the relative frequency of investigation of duration of residence and place of residence at a fixed date in the past.



Table 5. Migrant-identifying information collected, by continent  
 (Provisional results of an inquiry into national practices)

Continent	Number of countries reporting on information collected	Number of countries collecting information on			
		Place of birth	Place of previous residence	Duration of residence	Place of residence on a particular date in the past
Total	105	90	74	60	59
Africa	20	20	10	11	7
America, North	20	19	13	12	13
America, South	11	10	9	7	9
Asia	18	15	16	16	10
Europe	25	16	21	10	13
Oceania	10	9	4	3	6
USSR	1	1	1	1	1

41. Table 6 shows the number of countries reporting the collection of information on other specified characteristics of migrants. As would be expected, information on sex and age were each collected more frequently, in each region, than data on any other single characteristic. Almost without exception, the regional frequency of collection declined, in order, for data on marital status, occupation, industry, citizenship, number of children born alive and national and/or ethnic group.



42. Other topics investigated by at least half a dozen countries were educational characteristics (32 countries), reason for migration (23), economic characteristics aside from occupation and industry (17), literacy (16), religion (10), language (8) and income (6).

43. An attempt was made to relate the collection, tabulation and publication of information on each of the items to the source of the data. A number of the responses, however, appeared to be quite inconsistent. For example, data on a particular topic might be reported to be collected from one source but the information tabulated was reported as coming from another source, or data reported to be published were not reported to be collected. On the whole, there were many more indications of data collected than of those tabulated or published. Unfortunately, it was not possible to determine what proportion of the difference was attributable to a real difference between the amount of data collected and the amount subsequently tabulated and published and what proportion resulted from difficulties in completing the questionnaire. Whatever the real difference, part of it probably resulted from the fact that some countries were reporting on the investigation of internal migration in a field inquiry for which tabulation and/or publication had not yet been accomplished at the time the Statistical Office questionnaire was completed. Another part of the difference could merely reflect the fact that data collected in field inquiries in which internal migrants were identified from among the total population enumerated, or data available in population registers, are automatically collected for migrants as part of the total population, even though there is no intention of tabulating some or all of the information separately for the migrant subset.

44. Because of the inconsistencies, consideration was given in the present document primarily to the responses concerning data collected. Table 7, however, provides a summary of the number of countries reporting the collection, tabulation and publication of migrant-identifying data on the geographic characteristics of the population, which appeared to be somewhat more consistent than the information relating to other characteristics.

Table 7. Collection, tabulation and publication of data used in identifying internal migrants

(Provisional results of an inquiry into national practices)

Characteristic	Number of countries reporting		
	Collection	Tabulation	Publication
Place of birth	90	62	46
Place of previous residence	74	61	47
Duration of residence	60	46	33
Place of residence on a particular date in the past	59	46	37

45. Although the largest number of countries reported collecting information on place of birth, only 69 per cent of those collecting reported tabulation of the information and only 51 per cent reported publication. For the remaining three topics, the percentage of countries that tabulated the information collected ranged from 75 to 82 and the percentage that published the data varied from 55 to 64.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

46. The provisional results of the inquiry into national practices, as set forth above, offer little basis for United Nations guidelines that could be implemented effectively in the near future. Intercountry consistency in the definition of an internal migrant is neither possible nor necessarily desirable. National circumstances must dictate which internal population movements should be given priority of measurement and what should be the definition of a migrant for the particular movement investigated. It would appear appropriate, however, that countries be encouraged to pursue the investigation of internal migration and experiment with different approaches to the measurement of this significant component of population change. As national experience with collection, tabulation and publication of the statistics increases, a suitable common methodology may become apparent.

47. Perhaps the greatest assistance that could be rendered by any recommendations or guidelines at this time would be to stress the utility in both the collection of data and their publication of clear and unambiguous specification of the migration-defining area, the migration interval and, if relevant, the time period of presence or absence used in determining residence.

48. Some general principles of data collection might be mentioned as particularly relevant to internal migration statistics. These include the advantages of consistency of definition to provide comparability over time and the necessity of balancing considerations of the areas for which data are needed and cost efficiency in determining the collection and tabulation units to be used.

49. The inquiry has thus far produced no indication that any country has gone beyond the concept of internal migration as a change of residence, usually involving the crossing of an administrative boundary. It might, therefore, be useful to suggest that countries give consideration to expansion of the concept, or to the utility and feasibility of investigating other types of internal movement, as suggested in paragraphs 15-16.

50. Unless the final results of the inquiry prove to be considerably different from the provisional results presented in this document no further action seems to be warranted at this time.

