DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF JEAN BOURGEOIS-PICHAT
CHAIRMAN OF CICRED, 1971-1990
PREFACE
The idea of a multilingual thesaurus to facilitate the indexing and retrieval of population information came about when the Population Commission, at its seventeenth session in 1973, expressed interest in the possibility of computerizing demographic information along the lines developed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the social sciences, and recommended that the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat collaborate with the Committee for International Co-operation in National Research in Demography (CICRED) in the project. The Population Commission felt that an international bibliographic system on population matters could provide a most valuable service in view of the rapid increase in the publication of population studies.

With the financial support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which was then called United Nations Fund for Population Activities, CICRED started the preparation of the *Population Multilingual Thesaurus* (PMT) in September 1975, with the assistance of the late Jean Viet of Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, Paris, as editor, and a multilingual working group of experts from various regions of the world who had diversity of interests encompassing demography, population studies and family planning. The Institut National d’Études Démographiques (INED) made its computer equipment available for the project at no cost to CICRED. In August 1979, the PMT was published in English, French and Spanish and widely distributed free of charge.

No matter how well prepared a thesaurus may be, the work cannot be considered as having been completed. The terminology changes, new concepts are added to the discipline and deletions have to be made. All theses changes, as they occur, must be incorporated into a thesaurus to ensure that it will continue to serve the purposes for which it was created. In February 1981, an informal meeting was convened by the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat to discuss the management of the PMT within the framework of the global Population Information Network (POPIN). The meeting was attended by population information experts from different language areas, representing institutions utilizing, or which were planning to utilize, the PMT on a fairly large scale. The findings and recommendations of that informal meeting were considered by the POPIN Consultative Meeting held at Geneva in April 1981, which recommended that a POPIN Working Group on the Management of the PMT be set up.

Under the leadership of CICRED, the Working Group was formed with membership consisting of experts from POPIN member institutions from different language areas invited in their individual capacity because of their special knowledge of and experience with the use of a thesaurus. Among the organizations and institutions that have participated in the Working Group have been the following: the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat; the Dag Hammarskjold Library for *UNBIS Thesaurus* (United Nations Bibliographical Information System); the UNFPA Library; the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE); the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP); the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); Center for Population and Family Health, Columbia University; CICRED; Fundacao Sistema Estadual de Analise de Dados (SEADE), Sao Paulo, Brazil; League of Arab States; Population Information Program, Johns Hopkins University, for the POPLINE Thesaurus; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), for the Macrothesaurus for Information Processing in the Field of Economic and Social Development, and Population Index, Princeton University.

Chaired by the Director of the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat, the Working Group held its first meeting in New York from 1 to 3 March 1982. The issues discussed at the meeting included problems encountered in the use of the PMT; harmonization between the PMT and other thesauri; geographical names; proposals for additions, revisions and deletions; and future expansion. Since then, the Working Group, meeting whenever necessary, has been responsible for the maintenance of the PMT under the leadership of CICRED and with the financial support of UNFPA.

After almost four years of preparatory work, from 1980 to 1984, which was coordinated by Jean Viet from 1980 to 1984, the second edition of the PMT was published in English, French and Spanish by CICRED in 1984 under its new title, *POPIN Thesaurus: Population Multilingual Thesaurus*. The edition in Portuguese was published by the Fundacao Sistema Estadual de Analise de Dados (SEADE), and the Arabic version by the League of Arab States.

Following the guidelines laid down by the Working Group at its meetings in New York on 20-22 November 1989 and 28-31 May 1991, this volume, which is the third edition, was prepared by Richard Hankinson, Editor of Population Index, as consultant to CICRED. Data processing was undertaken by Françoise Gubry, Centre français sur la Population et le Développement (CEPED), Paris, with the collaboration of Renate Husseini, using the thesaurus management software Dixit with Texto-Logotel of Chemdata in Lyon, France. This edition incorporates and takes into account the suggestions for additions, deletions and changes received from: Asian-Pacific POPIN (ESCAP, Bangkok); Cairo Demographic Centre; Catholic University of Louvain; CELADE (ECLAC, Santiago); CICRED; Human Life Centre; INED; International Organization for Migration (IOM); Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI); Philippine Population Commission; Population Index (Princeton University); SEADE (Sao Paulo, Brazil); and University College (Cardiff).

Léon TABAH
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