

UNSC 2016 Agenda Item 3 j Refugee statistics Introduction by Mr. L Jones, Norway

Thank you Chair,

The Commission has before it a report by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT), Eurostat, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Statistics Norway which describes the progress in the work on statistics on refugees and some proposals for the future work

The Commission in 2015 supported to arrange an International meeting (conference) on Refugee Statistics. This meeting was held in Antalya in October 2015 and brought together national statistical offices, offices dealing with the admission of foreigners and refugees, research institutions, and a number of international organisations. A big thanks to the Turkish hosts for arranging this meeting.

The report from the meeting gives a comprehensive discussion of statistical challenges. (It is a background document to UNSC)

The report explores how to improve international refugee statistics, Improved international cooperation is an important part. The discussion focuses on establishing common definitions and technical guidelines

The meeting in Antalya discussed the use of administrative data and population registers to measure the refugees as well as the use of censuses and sample surveys to measure the magnitude and characteristics of refugee populations. The conference also covered various coordination mechanisms to improve refugee and asylum statistics.

A central finding was that there is a need for a clear distinction between stocks and flows. The flows – are individuals who migrate as asylum seekers or as refugees within a given time period while refugee stock is the number of individuals in a national population that is defined to be refugees. This measure will be an aggregation of the flows in and out and dependent on mortality.

Civil registration systems is recommended to play an important role as data source. There are however some preconditions to consider. We observe that the practice for how to handle the inflow of asylum seekers in civil registration is internationally unclear. The practice in many countries seems to be that even when refugees are registered they are not

fully included in the civil registration since they in most cases are not to be counted in the national population.

The development of civil registration and vital statistics, either by a designated authority or by the national statistical office, was highly recommended by the conference.

On censuses, a concrete suggestion was that supplementary instructions should be issued to the United Nations *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*.

We propose to the commission

- that UNSC establish an international expert group which will consist of concerned national statistical authorities, international organizations and academia as appropriate
- Terms of Reference will be submitted for approval (by Statistical Commission)
- The expert group will develop the recommendations in a handbook on refugee statistics including a practical refugee statistics compiler manual.
- We propose that a new international meeting is held late 2016 or early 2017. This event shall address the work with the handbook.
- The Group will report back to the commission in 2018 with the recommendations/handbook on refugee statistics for the adoption at the Commission.

- The work is estimated to be done by in kind contribution from organisations and national members of UNSC. We have an open invitation to participate and also contribute.

I will also take this opportunity to inform that we will arrange a side event Thursday where we will give further details on how we plan to organise this work.

This concludes my presentation. Let me add that the theme refugees are of extreme political importance and the phenomena represent one of the big global challenges. The importance of our contribution in handling the difficult situation should not be underestimated. We have in the document restricted our discussion to focus on the pure demographic

measurement of flows and stocks. It is however clear that official statistics will also have a role to play in the description of the social and political challenges.

Weak or non consistent statistics is not the cause of the refugee problem but maybe improved international official statistics can give a small contribution to not only mitigate the problems but also contribute to a reduction of the number of refugees.