

**United Nations Expert Group Meeting**  
**Improving Migration Data in the Context of the 2030 Agenda**

United Nations Headquarters  
New York, 20-22 June 2017

Concept note

The United Nations Statistics Division, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Division and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), will hold an expert group meeting on "Improving Migration Data in the Context of the 2030 Agenda". The meeting will be held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 20 to 22 June 2017.

**Background**

International migration continues to increase in scope, scale and complexity. Economic, social, demographic and technological transformations fuel population mobility across national borders. Today, virtually all countries in the world are affected by international migration, whether as countries of origin, destination or transit. As international migration, especially its linkages with development, receives growing attention as an emerging global issue, demand for data to assess the levels and trends of population mobility, as well as its multifaceted impacts on development has increased. There has been also an urgent call for better migration-related data to measure the progress towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals and targets.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/70/1), adopted by the General Assembly in September 2015 include several migration-related targets, addressing issues such as human trafficking, labour standards for migrant workers, health workforce development, student migration and the transfer costs of remittances. SDG target 10.7, the sole target dealing exclusively with migration, calls on countries to facilitate safe, orderly, regular and orderly migration and mobility and to implement well-managed migration policies. Furthermore, the pledge of the 2030 Agenda to "leave no one left behind" requires disaggregating relevant SDG indicators by migratory status, wherever relevant, in order to elucidate the vulnerability of migrants and certain types of mobility.

In September 2016, the General Assembly adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1). The Declaration recognizes the importance of enhancing international cooperation, including through capacity-building, financial support and technical assistance, to improve migration data collection. The Declaration stipulates that such data should be disaggregated by sex and age and include information on regular and irregular flows, the economic impacts of migration and refugee movements, human trafficking, the needs of refugees, migrants and host communities and other issues. The Declaration commits to adopting a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration by 2018.

The new global development framework and the growing attention to migration as a global issue pose significant challenges for national statistical offices and the international statistical

community, to meet the huge demands for migration and migration-related statistics. There is an urgent need to implement existing migration standards, refine new migration-related concepts, leverage traditional data sources and explore innovative means of data collection with a view to producing data needed for the SDG monitoring.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the meeting are:

1. to identify the SDG indicators that are relevant to international migration, to assess the data requirements for producing these indicators, and to discuss potential data sources, including their strengths and limitations;
2. to discuss how to produce harmonized data disaggregated by migratory status in monitoring the implementation of SDG indicators;
3. to highlight gaps in measuring the migration-related indicators and propose strategies to overcome these gaps, including the use of innovative methodologies and non-traditional data sources.

## **Expected outcomes**

The meeting will build on existing methodological work on migration statistics carried out by countries and relevant organisations. The outcome of the meeting will provide inputs to a technical report to guide the production and use of data for the migration-relevant SDG indicators by countries. The meeting will also formulate action-oriented recommendations on the collection of migration-related data for migration-relevant development indicators and the global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration.

## **Participation**

Participants will include national experts from statistical offices and other entities dealing with international migration, experts from the United Nations system and other relevant international organizations and academia well versed in migration statistics.

## **Issues to be discussed**

### *(a) Migration-related SDG indicators*

What do we mean by migration-relevant SDG indicators? What is the relevance of those migration-relevant indicators at the national level? What is the availability of those data? Are they conceptually refined? How do we address needs for migration data for countries concerned with emigration?

### *(b) Disaggregation by migratory status*

How can “migratory status” be defined in the context of data disaggregation? Should we consider any other grounds than country of birth or citizenship, such as duration of stay, legal status, place of birth or citizenship of the parent, refugee status, etc.? What other variables should be taken into account in disaggregating data by migratory status? Should we make a distinction between households with migrants and those without migrants? How do we treat groups of people who might not be migrants themselves but are closely associated with migrants such as children of migrants and refugees? Do we consider internal migrants as well?

*(c) Data sources*

What are potential sources of statistical information for the migration-related indicators: population and housing censuses, national household surveys and administrative data sources? What is the potential contribution of non-traditional data sources? What are the respective strengths and limitations of these sources for collecting migration-related indicators? Can we propose a minimum set of standardized migration questions ("migration module") to be attached to existing national household surveys?

*(d) Strategies for data improvement*

What strategies should national statistical offices adopt to meet the demand for migration-related data? What are current attempts to improve the concepts of migration-related indicators? Can migration data from different sources be integrated? What statistical recommendations can be formulated for the global compact for safe, regular and orderly migration?