

Revision and update of the 20th ▶ ICLS Guidelines concerning statistics of international labour migration

Elisa M. Benes

Head, Rights, Migration and Skills Statistics Unit (RMSSU),
ILO Statistics Department

UN Technical Workshop on International Migration and Temporary Mobility Statistics
16-19 July 2024, Warsaw, Poland

Contents

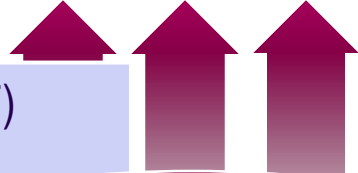
- **International standard-setting mechanism in labour statistics**
 - International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS)
 - ICLS Guidelines and resolutions
 - 20th ICLS Guidelines concerning statistics of international labour migration
- **Revision and update of the 20th ICLS Guidelines on ILM statistics**
 - Objectives, timelines, ILO Technical working group
 - Main revisions introduced
 - Revised conceptual framework and priority groups

► International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS)

- International standard-setting mechanism in labour statistics
- **Tripartite structure:** Governments (NSO & MoL), Workers, Employers)
- Meets every 5 years since 1923, hosted by ILO
- **ILO** hosts and acts as **technical secretariat**
- Reviews and endorses **Resolutions and Guidelines**
- Regularly informs the UN Statistical Commission of its decisions



Towards ICLS standards on international labour migration statistics (ILMS)

2023	21st ICLS	Report on Progress and country practices (Room documents 16, 17) Revised draft Guidelines (Annex I, Room document 17) Mandate to finalize revision of Guidelines by mid-2025	 <p>Global Compact Migration (2018) Global Compact Refugees (2018) SDG 2030 Agenda (2015)</p>
2018	20th ICLS	Guidelines concerning statistics of ILM Mandate to test Guidelines, continue methodological work, and report on progress	
2013	19th ICLS	Mandate to develop 1 st set of statistical standards on ILM	
2008	39 th UNSC, Employment statistics programme review	“Short-term” international labour migration statistics identified as priority topic for development	

Main features of 20th ICLS Guidelines on ILM statistics (2018)

- Recognized policy relevance of ILM statistics
- Introduced 3 main components
 - Each component covered all persons who crossed international borders and had a labour attachment in destination country
 - 1. **International migrant workers**
 - (a) resident migrant worker
 - (b) non-resident migrant worker
 - 2. **Return international migrant workers**
 - (a) who changed country of residence
 - (b) who did not change country of residence
 - 3. **For-work international migrants**
 - (a) who changed country of residence
 - (b) who did not change country of residence
- Specified core indicators and priority data items
- Recommended complementary use of various data sources
- Mandated ILO to continue methodological work with TWG

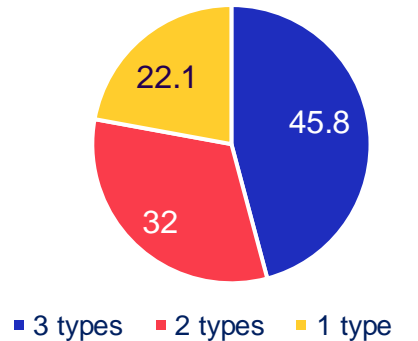
- Took as **starting point the 1998 UN Recommendations for international migration statistics**. **Now under revision**
- Expanded scope to cover “short term” labour migration (i.e. frontier workers, seasonal migrant workers and others with short durations of stay abroad).

Different availability of main potential ILM data sources (% of countries)

► Table 2. Share of countries by region/income group reporting different data sources, 2015-2023

Region/Income group	Number of countries covered	Population census (%)	Household surveys (%)		Population registers (%)	Border entries and/or exits (%)	Work permits (%)
			Specialized migration survey	Labour Force Survey			
Total	131	91.6	16.8	90.8	51.9	66.4	66.4
By region							
Africa	35	91.4	20.0	74.3	45.7	74.3	65.7
Americas	19	100.0	26.3	100.0	42.1	94.7	63.2
Arab States	7	57.1	0.0	85.7	71.4	42.9	42.9
Asia and the Pacific	29	89.7	10.3	75.9	41.4	69.0	65.5
Europe, Central Asia	41	95.1	17.1	100.0	65.9	48.8	73.2
By income group							
High income	45	95.6	15.6	100.0	60.0	55.6	75.6
Upper-middle income	35	94.3	20.0	34.3	54.3	80.0	65.7
Lower-middle income	36	91.7	19.4	77.8	44.4	63.9	58.3
Low income	15	73.3	6.7	100.0	40.0	73.3	60.0

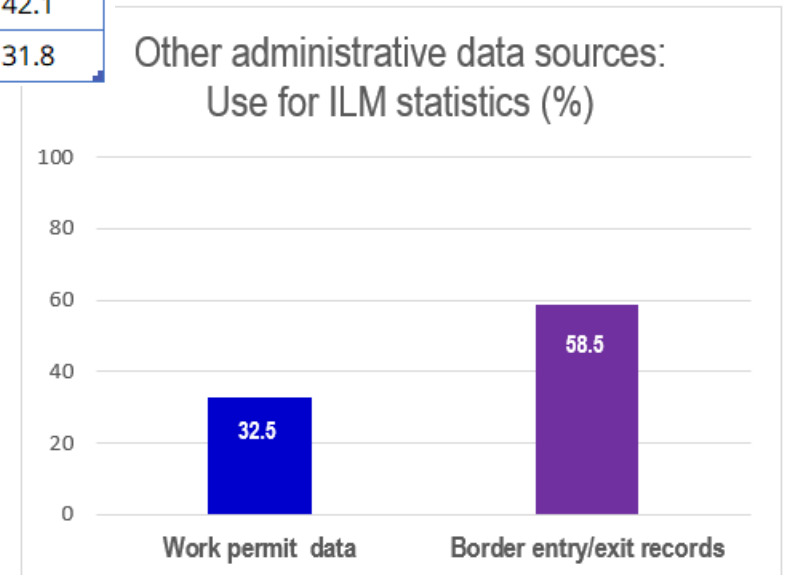
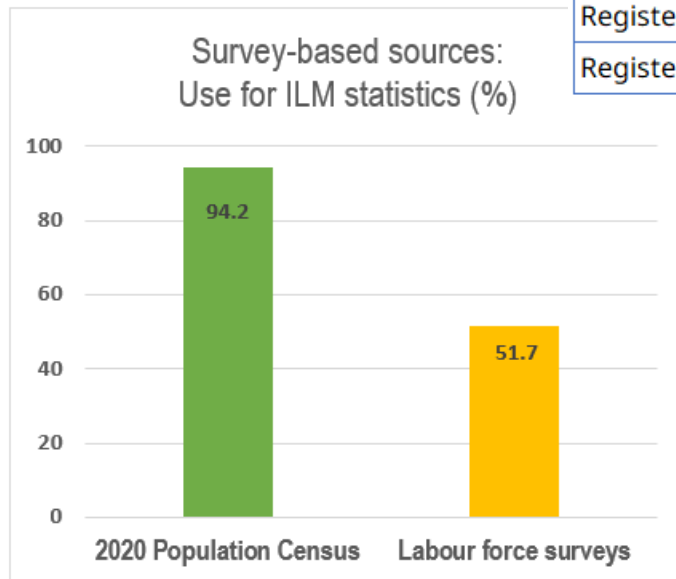
Combined availability of main ILM data sources



- Population census and LFS most prevalent (over 90%)
- Specialized migration surveys least available (16.8%)
- Administrative sources available in less than 2/3 of countries
- Less than half of countries have 3 main types of sources (45.8%)

Partial use of available sources for ILMS (% of countries)

Type of register	Available	Used for statistics	
		N	%
Population register	66	37	56.1
Register of foreign citizens	43	26	60.5
Register of foreign workers	34	18	52.9
Register of refugees and asylum seekers	40	28	70.0
Register of nationals abroad	38	16	42.1
Register of nationals working abroad	22	7	31.8



Differences in priority groups (n of countries)

► Table 30. Groups of international migrant workers for which statistics are needed by level of priority and country income-group (number of countries)

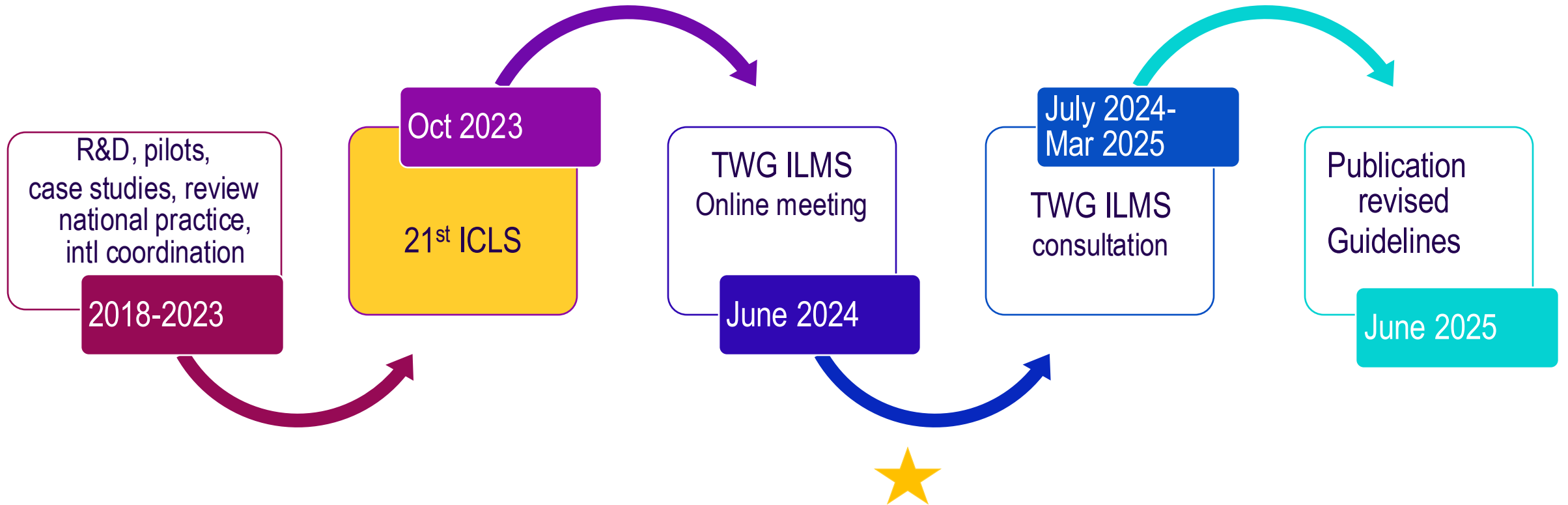
Priority group	Income group				Total
	High income	Upper-middle income	Lower-middle income	Low income	
International migrants resident and working in country	21	23	24	9	77
Nationals living and working abroad	11	22	23	11	67
Return international migrant workers	9	15	21	9	54
Frontier workers (coming into the country)	9	8	11	5	33
Seasonal migrant workers (going abroad)	9	9	8	4	30
Frontier workers (going abroad)	7	7	11	4	29
Seasonal migrant workers (coming into the country)	8	8	6	3	25
Other short term migrant workers (coming into the country)	8	5	8	3	24
Other short term migrant workers (going to work abroad)	1	6	9	3	19

- **Intl. migrant workers in the country**
 - Top for high & middle income
- **Nationals living & working abroad**
 - Top for low income
 - 2nd priority for middle income
- **Return international migrant workers**
 - 3rd highest priority globally
- **Temporary labour mobility**
 - Top frontier workers entering country
 - 2nd seasonal & frontier workers going abroad

Revision and update of the 20th ICLS Guidelines

- **Formalize framework for ILM statistics**
 - Introduce statistical definitions for key concepts: international labour mobility, labour attachment, etc
- **Improve consistency with frameworks in closely related domains**
 - International migration and mobility statistics (2021 UN Framework and 2023 Indicator set)
 - Refugee, asylum seeker and statelessness statistics (2018, 2023 UNSC)
 - Labour force and work statistics (19th ICLS Resolution, 20th ICLS Resolution)
 - Economic statistics (trade in services statistics)
- **Expand and introduce flexibility on priority groups to be measured, as per country context**
 - To reflect different ILM patterns as country of origin, transit and/or destination
 - To reflect different ILM patterns considering permanent and/or temporary nature of movements
- **Expand guidance to inform national programmes for ILM statistics**
 - Introduce guidance on the value of specific sources, and how to minimize measurement challenges
 - Introduce guidance on different periodicities for different priority groups, as per national context and statistical capacity
 - Introduce guidance on priority indicators, tabulation and essential disaggregation

Roadmap to finalize the revision of the Guidelines



ILO Technical Working Group on ILMS composition (2024)

Stakeholder diversity

- Governments
 - National statistics office (27)
 - Ministry of labour (8)
 - Ministry of migration (1)
 - Population agency (1)
 - Central bank (1)
- Employers' (2)
- Workers' (1)
- Regional and international organizations (4)

Country regional diversity

- Africa (8)
- Americas (6)
- Asia Pacific (8)
- Arab States (2)
- Europe and Central Asia (7)

Thematic experience

- Labour statistics only (36)
- International migration statistics only (21)
- Both (19)

Experience with data sources

Survey based sources

- Population census (46)
- Specialized migration surveys (29)
- Labour force surveys (56)
- Establishment surveys (38)

Administrative based sources

- Population registers (27)
- Visa and work permit records (15)
- Border records (14)

Main revisions introduced in revised draft Guidelines (2023)

Section of revised draft Guidelines	Type of revision
I. Objectives	Expanded to promote integration with labour market statistics
II. Reference concepts and scope	Scope same as before Concepts formalized, aligned with relevant statistical standards
III. Measures and priority groups	Operational definitions expanded (9 groups), aligned with relevant statistical standards
IV. Items of data collection or compilation	Reorganized to support priority setting (minimum, additional, ...)
V. Core indicators and tabulations	Reorganized and expanded, to support priority setting
VI. Periodicity of data collection and reporting	New section, to support progressive development of national statistics programmes
VII. Data sources	Expanded to highlight complementary value of each source type
VIII. Measurement issues	Expanded to complement data sources section
IX. International reporting	New section, to promote global data availability and sharing
X. ILO work	Consolidated within single section

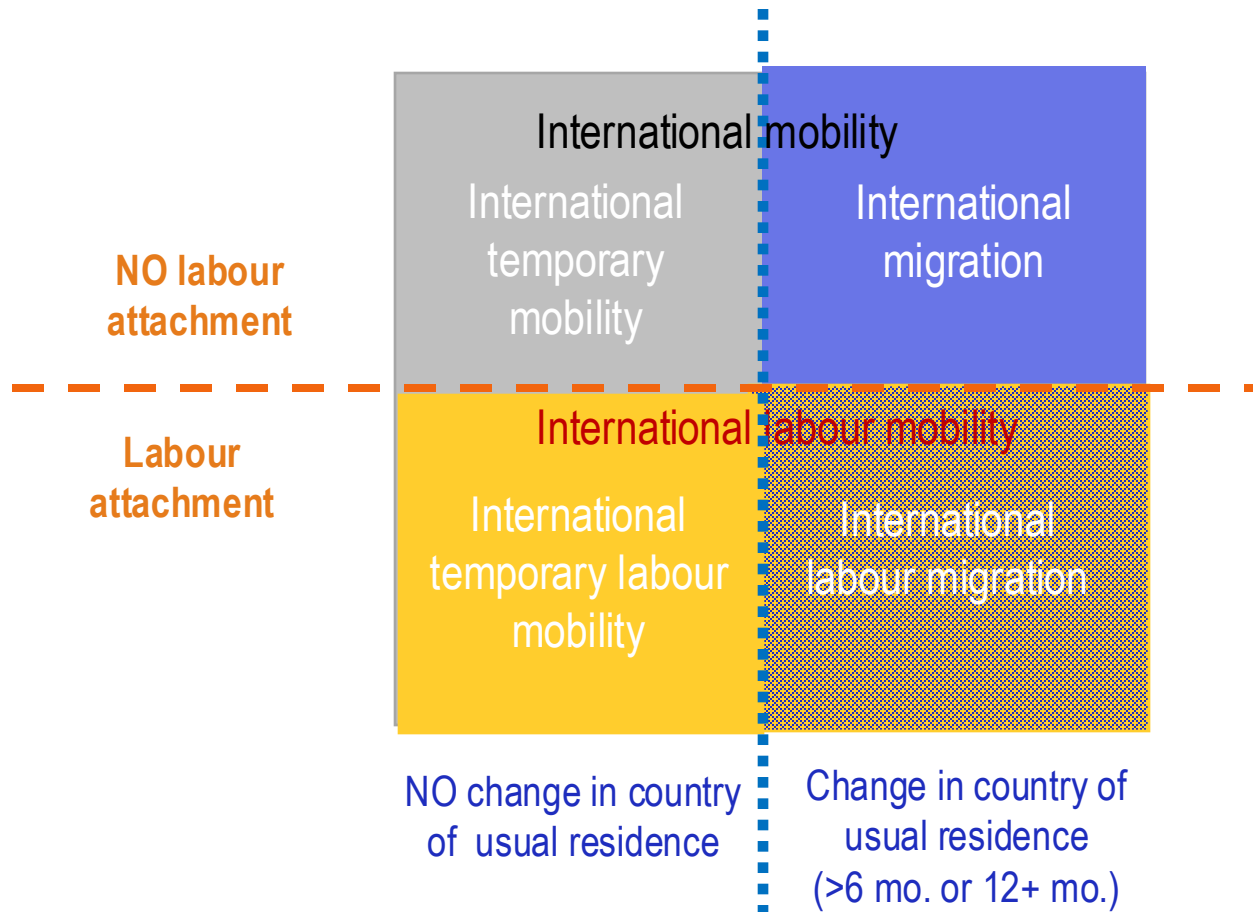
New concepts introduced to set the scope of ILMM statistics

- **International labour mobility:** All movements of persons that cross international borders and involve a labour attachment in the country of destination
 - **International labour migration:** All movements of persons across international borders that involve a labour attachment in the country of destination and result in a change in the country of residence
 - **International temporary labour mobility:** All movements of persons that cross international borders and involve a labour attachment in the country of destination but do not result in a change in the country of residence

Aligned with revised UN framework for international migration and mobility statistics (2021)

- **International mobility:** All movements that cross international borders
 - **International migration:** All movements resulting in a change in the country of residence
 - **International temporary mobility:** All movements that cross international borders that do not result in a change in the country of residence

► Conceptual framework based on new concepts introduced



- Enables consistency with new UN conceptual framework for international migration and mobility statistics (2021)
- Maintains coherence with relevant reference populations for statistical purposes
 - Resident population
 - Temporary non-resident population

► Labour attachment definition (new)

Labour attachment

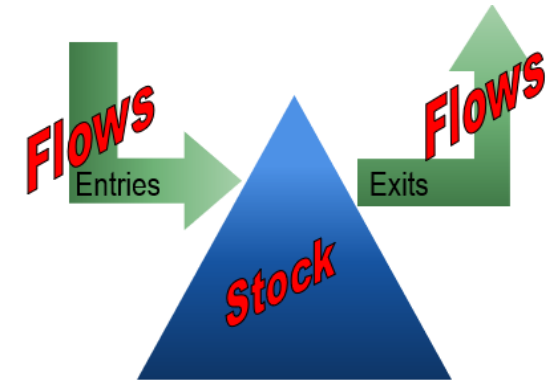
Refers to **engagement, or intention to engage, in the production of goods or provision of services in exchange for remuneration** (i.e. employment) in the country of destination

- International workers may have a labour attachment in the country of destination as part of the:
 - **Resident labour force**
 - (Foreign born / foreign national) residents who are counted as employed or unemployed, **in line with 19th ICLS resolution**
 - **Non-resident labour force**
 - Non-residents, present, who engage or intend to engage in the production and/or provision of services, in exchange for remuneration, in the country
- International workers may have a...
 - work relationship **as independent worker or dependent worker, in line with 20th ICLS resolution (ICSE-18)**
 - With an economic unit resident in the country of origin, in the country of destination, or in a third country.
 - To include within scope cross-border service providers, regardless of location of employer economic unit, **in line with GATS, mode 4**

Revised 9 priority groups and measures (Annex I, paras. 9-11)

- Each defined separately from a country of measurement perspective
- Enables different prioritization, frequency of measurement by countries as per relevance and policy need
- Revised terminology and operational definitions, aligned with UN framework, as sub-set of parent category
- Overarching term proposed “**International workers**”

A. International labour migration	B. International temporary labour mobility
STOCKS	
A1s. Immigrant (migrant) workers	B1s. Non-resident workers
A2s. Emigrant workers	B2s. Residents working abroad
A3s. Returned international migrant workers	
FLOWS	
A1f. Inflow of for-work migrants	B1f. Inflow of for-work non-residents
	...
A2f. Outflow of for-work migrants	B2f. Outflow of for-work residents
	...



Periodicity of reporting

- **Stock / flows for priority groups of international workers**

As per national relevance

Where data sources are in place

- Immigrant workers: Annual
- Emigrant workers: Every 3-5 years
- Return international migrant workers: Every 3-5 years

Where data sources not in place

- Immigrant workers: Every 3-5 years

- **Labour force statistics by international migrant status**

For countries with sizeable share of immigrants in population

- Annual
- For selected topics (e.g.)

Labour force participation rate

Employment to population ratio

Unemployment rate

Employed by status in employment

Employed by major occupation

Employed by major industry

- **Sectoral employment statistics**

Where immigrant workers concentrated in selected industries, in collective living quarters

- Annual: Employment statistics
- Every 3-5 years: Detailed on living conditions of migrant workers in collective living quarters

▶ Main feedback from online meeting (June 2024)

- ✓ Alignment with related statistical standards
 - ✓ Added flexibility on priority groups and measures
 - ✓ Added flexibility on data collection and periodicity of reporting as per national relevance and statistical infrastructure
- Priority to stock measures
 - Improve guidance on data collection and periodicity of reporting for benchmark stock measures versus compositional measures
 - Improve data collection guidance for countries with small share of immigrant population
 - Introduce guidance on combination of sources, estimation, modelling, callibration

Resources

- **Labour migration at the 21st ICLS**

- [Report I: General report](#) (sections 2.2, 3.14, 4.3, and 5.2);
- [Room document 16: Review of country practices](#)
- [Room document 17: Proposal for revised Guidelines](#)

- **ILOSTAT Statistics on international labour migration**

<https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/labour-migration/>

- **20th ICLS Guidelines concerning statistics of international labour migration (2018)**

<https://ilostat.ilo.org/about/standards/icls/icls-documents/#icls20>



The screenshot shows the ILOSTAT website interface. At the top, there is a blue navigation bar with the ILO logo, 'International Labour Organization', 'ILOSTAT', and menu items for 'DATA', 'COUNTRY PROFILES', 'RESOURCES', a search icon, and a hamburger menu icon. Below the navigation bar, the breadcrumb path reads 'Home > Topics > Statistics on labour migrants'. The main heading is 'Statistics on international labour migration'. On the left, there is a photograph of a woman wearing a cap, with a text overlay that reads: 'They are often to be found in temporary, informal or unprotected jobs'. To the right of the photo, there is a paragraph of text: 'In today's globalized world, labour migration is an increasingly important policy issue. Economic hardship and geopolitical crises leading to the lack of decent work are resulting in growing and diverse migratory movements. In many economies, including emerging economies, ageing populations and declining labour forces are also contributing to the growing mobility of workers. Women are joining migration flows in growing numbers as independent workers, with important consequences for gender equality in countries of origin and destination alike.' Further to the right, another paragraph states: 'We need to understand these dynamic migrant flows and their implications for labour markets, particularly in migrant-dominated sectors. This page presents statistical information on migrant worker stocks, inflows and outflows.' At the bottom right, there is a 'Table of contents' section with a list of links: 'Latest posts', 'Featured publication', 'Data', 'Projects', 'Analysis', 'Methods', 'Tutorials for data reporters o...', 'SDGs and labour migration', and 'See also'.