



REPORT ON REGIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP ON ADMINISTRATIVE DATA FOR MIGRATION STATISTICS FOR SADC MEMBER STATES

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JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of a harmonized migration database system to provide migration flows and profiles within the region is a medium-term objective of the SADC Secretariat. The Ministerial Committee of Organ and the Statistics Committee are the statutory meetings that meet annually for strategic guidance on migration and statistics matters and there are decisions from those forums directing Secretariat to ensure all Member States produces and disseminates harmonized migration statistics on an annual or regular basis.

As part of the process to implement Ministerial Meetings decisions, Secretariat, in collaboration with International Organisation for Migration (IOM), undertook several activities during 2020 to 2024 and lastly produced harmonized modules for collection of disaggregated migration statistics through surveys and censuses. However, restricting only to household surveys and censuses are not enough thereby needing to access administrative data records on migration to unlock its full potential. Administrative Data has big advantages given its much less costly than censuses and surveys. The programme of SADC Secretariat is guided by its legal instrument, the Protocol on Statistics where Article 6 – 3 (a) of the SADC Protocol on Statistics emphasises on administrative data and stipulates: “States Parties shall establish institutional arrangements within their NSS to prioritize development and implementation of guidelines for production and dissemination of Official Statistics from administrative data sources.”

Within this context, it was felt very essential to bring in stakeholders’ institutions concerned with migration such as the National Statistics Offices (NSOs), Ministry of Labour and Immigration Departments of SADC Member States in a regional set up to discuss the main issues towards successful implementation and modernization of administrative data systems to build/enhance migration statistics database. The workshop, under the SADC Regional Statistics Project funded by the World Bank Group, was organized by the SADC

Secretariat and implemented with technical support from the Collaborative on Administrative Data (CAD) and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), Social and Gender Statistics Section (handling migration statistics). The workshop focused on strengthening Member States' capacity to produce international migration statistics using administrative data sources, bringing together key stakeholders from government agencies involved in migration data, namely National Statistical Offices, Labour Ministries and Immigration Authorities.

2. THE WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

As the primary objective of the workshop was to enhance the technical capacities of migration statisticians, labour analysts and immigration experts, the content of the training was based on several frameworks including the: revised 2025 UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility; and Administrative Data Toolkits assessing quality. Several presentations including by Member States were made and the participants exchanged knowledge and experience through moderated discussions and exercises. The concept of peer-to-peer learning was also part of the workshop whereby all Member States presented their current practices and reviewed by participants making the sessions very interacting. All Member States presentation followed a standardised template to ensure that each reported on specific items of interest to the SADC Secretariat, particularly: the organizational structure, institutional arrangements and data sharing, the migration statistics currently produced and disseminated by each Member State, technical assistance received and capacity building needs. The specific objectives were as follows:

- (i) Providing training to Member States on the potential of using administrative data sources to develop or enhance migration statistics compilation, including on data quality, metadata, agreeing on and formalizing data sharing, confidentiality, IT security and interoperability;
- (ii) Taking stock of each Member State's current capacity with respect to:
 - a. the computation of statistics on migration and migrants and
 - b. availability of administrative data sources that cover migration data
- (iii) Sharing good practices and identify challenges encountered by Member States in computation of migration statistics such as: financial, technical, legal and institutional amongst others; and
- (iv) Drafting a road map for each Member State regarding national training and technical assistance for implementation for the period 2025 – 28 to ensure necessary access to administrative data on migration and migrants.

3. PARTICIPANTS

All SADC Member States were represented in the workshop except the Immigration Department of the Republic of Mauritius. Sao Tome and Principe (non-SADC member) also participated in the workshop as part of the agreed arrangements with the World Bank on regional training activities. The resource entities and facilitators were SADC Secretariat, UNSD, IOM and GPSDD (Global Partnership on Sustainable Data Development).

4. KEY WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

a) Day 1

The workshop commenced with opening remarks by the SADC Secretariat and Zimbabwe as Chair of SADC, followed by participant introductions and the adoption of the workshop objectives and agenda. Initial presentations covered strategic global and regional frameworks on migration statistics. The SADC Secretariat presentation highlighted the rationale of the workshop to the **policy frameworks on regional integration** systematically through a results-based framework: Vision 2050, Regional Indicative Strategy Development Plan (RISDP 2020 – 30) and the Regional Strategy for Development of Statistics (RSDS 2020 – 30). Elaboration on the importance of the SADC Protocol on Statistics was also presented to strengthen governance on regional statistics, ensuring alignment with national, continental, and global agendas. Finally, the environmental and social safeguards of the SADC Regional Statistics Project was presented catering for issues such as occupational health, grievances and related factors to direct beneficiaries of the project such as Member States and partners institutions.

UNSD discussed the increasing **complexity of international migration** and the significant gaps in data collection, especially regarding inflows, outflows, and disaggregated data. It spotlighted the revised 2025 UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility, which focus on aligning migration and population measurement, leveraging administrative data sources, and developing legal frameworks and data sharing agreements to improve the accuracy and comprehensiveness of migration statistics for evidence-based policies.

IOM delivered a presentation highlighting key **international frameworks relevant to migration**, including Agenda 2030 and the Global Compact for Migration (GCM). The presentation underscored the critical importance of collecting, analysing, and disseminating high-quality migration data to inform evidence-based policies. Specific attention was given to SDG targets related to migration, particularly targets 10.7 and 17.18, emphasizing the need for data disaggregation by migratory status. Additionally, the presentation discussed strategies for enhancing national and regional capacities, such as harmonizing data collection methodologies, strengthening administrative data systems, and fostering greater international cooperation and coordination to manage migration effectively and sustainably. The presentation underscored IOM's role in providing technical assistance, training, and ICT systems for administrative data, such as MIDAS.

A group exercise facilitated by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) migration team allowed participants to discuss together, among the three agencies in each Member State, migration policy data needs, priorities and current data availability in their respective Member States.

The Collaborative on Administrative Data (CAD) team provided an overview of the **initiative - a multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at enhancing Member State capacities to utilize administrative data for statistical purposes**. The presentation outlined the CAD's practical, member-driven approach and detailed its three specialized task teams: institutional framework, coordination and partnerships, data management and standardization and technical interoperability and data linking. The presentation also highlighted available resources, including tools and materials developed specifically for addressing common challenges such as statistical legal frameworks, formal agreements, and data quality, along with details of an e-learning course on administrative data (previously shared with participants as part of the pre-workshop assignment).

The session also included a comprehensive presentation by the CAD team introducing the **concept and benefits of administrative data** for statistics. Key points included types of administrative data, necessary conditions for successful integration into the National Statistical System, and the critical role of cooperation, legal frameworks, IT infrastructure, and user engagement. The session also addressed data stewardship, strategies for strengthening national data systems, and the value of national statistics strategies for guiding coordination and quality assurance. Finally, the CAD team also re-introduced the administrative data sources mapping tool that was sent for Member State teams to begin filling out before the workshop.

b) Day 2

A presentation on metadata by the CAD emphasized its importance in understanding, using, and linking data within and across institutions. The presentation introduced a **hierarchical framework for metadata**, from basic structural descriptors (e.g. reference period, unit, source) to detailed methodological and quality-related information. Examples and case studies illustrated the implications of inconsistent definitions and classifications. The presentation underscored the need for national agreement on metadata standards to ensure comparability, transparency, and user trust. Interactive exercises engaged participants to deepen understanding.

A presentation by the International Labour Organization (ILO) was delivered on **international labour migration statistics (ILMS)**, emphasizing the importance of a rights-based, inclusive conceptual framework aligned with ICLS and UN recommendations. Key topics included distinctions between international labour migration and temporary labour mobility, priority data items and sources (such as permits, surveys, and censuses), and strategies for collecting and reporting labour migration indicators. The session also introduced proposed permit statistics classifications to support monitoring of managed labour mobility and advocated for integrating ILMS into national statistical strategies through coordinated, sustainable, and user-informed data systems.

UNSD delivered a detailed presentation on the **conceptual framework of the revised Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility**

endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission. The presentation clarified the distinctions between international migration and temporary mobility, while emphasizing the alignment between measurements of stocks and flows. It highlighted the relevance of disaggregating data by four subpopulations (e.g., native-born citizens, foreign-born citizens, foreign-born foreign citizens and native-born foreign citizens) to better serve migration policy needs, and detailed core and additional migration statistics recommended for national production. There were some questions raised by participants regarding the use of the term “native-born” given its specific meaning in certain Member State contexts in the region associated with indigenous / native populations. UNSD clarified that in the migration statistics framework the term merely specifies individuals born inside the Member State.

The CAD team followed with a presentation on **administrative data quality**, examining how quality assurance practices apply to administrative sources. The presentation outlined the UN National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) and its dimensions, and provided practical steps for assessing administrative data quality, including the importance of metadata, institutional arrangements, and understanding data flows. It emphasized key challenges in administrative data – such as inconsistencies in classifications and potential gaps – and stressed the importance of inter-agency communication, legal frameworks, and aligning data practices with user needs. Participants discussed national experiences and identified common issues.

c) Day 3

UNSD delivered a presentation on **data sources for migration statistics**, highlighting the roles of censuses, surveys, administrative data, and non-traditional sources. The session emphasized how different sources complement one another and detailed strengths and limitations. The presentation also covered how combinations of sources could be used to calculate the core migration stock and flow statistics presented in the UN Recommendations. A representative from Statistics South Africa, who was previously chair of the UN Expert Group on Migration Statistics, then highlighted specificities of the regional context in relation to migrations statistics.

Member States then had a chance to continue their inter-agency collaborative work on their administrative data mapping tools with assistance from the UNSD and CAD teams.

The CAD team presented on **formalizing data sharing and the legal frameworks** supporting statistical use of administrative data. The presentation introduced key principles from the Generic Law on Official Statistics (GLOS), emphasizing the legal mandate for accessing administrative data, protecting confidentiality, and ensuring professional independence. It detailed how legal frameworks interact with other laws (such as personal data protection and transparency laws) and highlighted the importance of flexible and formalized cooperation mechanisms, such as Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs). Practical guidance and resources for developing MoUs were also presented, including CAD's MoU guide and template.

A joint presentation between CAD and IOM on **data confidentiality and security** highlighted the importance of safeguarding data collected for statistics, as outlined in Principle 6 of the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. The presentation covered national and international frameworks such as GDPR, as well as practical measures like staff training, restricted data access, privacy preserving techniques, and secure data transmission protocols. Emphasis was placed on building institutional trust, managing internal and external risks, and implementing clear confidentiality policies to ensure responsible data use throughout the statistical system.

d) Day 4

The CAD delivered a presentation on **data interoperability and linking**, covering definitions, prerequisites, benefits, and methods used in record linkage. The session explained the difference between deterministic and probabilistic record linkage and outlined typical challenges – such as inconsistent formats, missing values, and lack of unique identifiers. The presentation gave an overview of common tools and software for data linking and emphasized the importance of standardizing and pre-processing data prior to linkage.

UNSD then led the participants in a group work exercise to determine whether the core migration stock and flow statistics, as defined by the UN Recommendations, could be produced in each Member State. Each Member State's participants worked together to assess data availability, gaps and methodological challenges. This was followed by a plenary discussion summarizing findings.

e) Day 5

SADC Secretariat provided an overview of the **way forward** for regional cooperation and continued capacity building, including specific recommendations for both the SADC Secretariat and Member States (see below). Participants had a chance to review and provide feedback on the recommendations. Workshop evaluation was also conducted.

The workshop concluded with closing remarks delivered by the SADC Secretariat, Zimbabwe, UNSD, the CAD, and IOM, summarizing achievements, key learning points, and future commitments.

5. WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS

a) FOR SADC SECRETARIAT

1. Advocate for effective collaboration between Immigration, Labour and Statistics for production and dissemination of migration statistics at national and regional levels.
2. Capacitate Member States (statistics, immigration and labour) on:
 - a. Supporting effective inter-agency administrative data governance frameworks (including for data sharing);

- b. Statistical concepts and implementation of the latest UN endorsed recommendations on migration statistics and the integration of administrative data sources;
 - c. Digitalization of priority administrative data sources to support the production of migration statistics.
- 3. Leverage partnerships with relevant international stakeholders.

b) FOR MEMBER STATES

1. Establish a common understanding of the benefits of collaboration and data sharing to make increased use of various data sources, including administrative data, for migration statistics production.
2. Create/reinforce legal frameworks and institutional arrangements such as the national TWGs as per the approved SADC Guidelines for Migration Statistics by Statistics Committee and Ministerial Committee of Organ, including establishing MoUs.
3. Define a list of working priorities building on the roadmap developed during the course of the workshop.
4. Implement the UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility, including updated statistical definitions, integrating census, surveys, and administrative records to produce migration statistics.
5. Finalize the mapping tool of administrative data adapted to migration statistics by May 2025, prior to SADC Statistics Committee for assessment and submission. This is a primary criterion for receiving training/technical assistance on the subject matter.
6. Understand, assess, and document data flows and quality of existing data, building on the finalized mapping tool and other available resources developed in the context of the CAD.
7. Define requirements for digitalization of administrative data workflows, including assessing if IOM tools such as MIDAS may be appropriate or can be adapted/expanded.
8. Align migration administrative data systems to the SADC harmonization guidelines and for the purpose of Implementing the new UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility.
9. Learn from peers (peer-to-peer learning) in the region, including both producers and users of Statistics to enhance knowledge and capacity for development of migration statistics.

6. CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

- (i) The workshop achieved its objectives in advancing the capacity of SADC Member States to utilize administrative data sources for the production of migration statistics (based on participant evaluations). Through presentations, group exercises, and inter-agency collaboration, participants increased their understanding of the revised UN *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility* endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission, including the core migration statistics that

are recommended to be produced by all Member States.

- (ii) UNSD and the CAD presented best practices and key considerations when using administrative data in the production of statistics, including data quality, metadata, confidentiality, IT security, and data linking, increasing the capacity of Member States to effectively use administrative data for evidence-based policymaking. Participants received guidance on the practical aspects of harmonizing and integrating data across diverse administrative data sources and with field-based data from the population and housing census.
- (iii) The workshop strengthened institutional collaboration at the national level by bringing together National Statistical Offices, Immigration Authorities and Labour Ministries to enhance coordination and data-sharing for improved migration statistics. The workshop also supported the development of national roadmaps for advancing the production of migration statistics, anchored in improved access to, and use of, administrative data.
- (iv) Additionally, the workshop facilitated regional exchange and promoted harmonization by enabling Member States to share experiences and best practices in the context of migration data and statistics.
- (v) Based on the findings and outcomes of the workshop, the SADC Secretariat will put together and present to the SADC Statistics Committee, a proposal for further capacity building and support to Member States in implementing their national roadmaps and fulfilling the recommendations agreed during the workshop. UNSD, the CAD and IOM will provide advice to, and potentially collaborate with, the SADC Secretariat on planned capacity building activities involving the implementation of the *UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility* and the integration of administrative data sources.
- (vi) Next steps for Member States include finalizing the administrative data mapping tool, preparing national roadmaps prioritizing digitalization efforts, formalizing data-sharing arrangements, and strengthening institutional frameworks for regular production and dissemination of migration statistics. This is a key condition to benefit from the project national trainings and technical assistance activities on administrative data for migration statistics.

Additional information and reference materials may be found on the workshop website: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/meetings/2025/migration-wk-sadc-20250317/>

ANNEX:**PROGRAMME OF WORK**

Time	Agenda item	Facilitator
DAY 1: 17 March 2025		
08:30 – 09:00	Registration of participants	SADC Secretariat
09:00 – 09:30	Welcome Remarks and Official Opening	SADC Secretariat Host Member State
09:30 – 10:00	Introduction of participants, Workshop objectives, Expected Outcomes Adoption of the agenda	SADC Secretariat and UNSD, CAD
10:00 – 10:30	Session 1. Presentation on strategic frameworks on regional statistics and migration policy in SADC region	SADC Secretariat
10:30 – 11:00	GROUP PHOTO AND BREAK	
11:00 – 11:30	Session 2. Migration statistics introduction – overview of the endorsed recommendations	UNSD
11:30 – 12:00	Session 3. IOM presentation	IOM
12:00 – 12:30	Q&A	UNSD
12:30 – 13:00	Session 4. Discussion of migration policy data needs (Exercise - table of key policy questions concerning migration and data availability)	UNSD
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH	
14:00 – 14:30	Member State presentation + Q&A	Zambia
14:30 – 15:00	Member State presentation + Q&A	Mauritius
15:00 – 15:30	Session 5. Introduction to the use of administrative data for statistics production, the Collaborative on administrative data (CAD) and recap of modules 1+2 of the e-learning course on administrative data	CAD
15:30 – 16:30	Discussion of filled mapping exercises	CAD
16:30	BREAK	
DAY 2: 18 March 2025		
09:00 – 09:30	Member State presentation + Q&A	Lesotho

09.30 – 10.00	Member State presentation + Q&A	Namibia
10:00 – 10:30	Continued	
10:30 – 11:00	BREAK	
11:00 – 11:30	Session 6. Metadata (module 4 of admin data e-learning)	CAD
11:30 – 12:00	Exercises on metadata	CAD
12.00 – 12.30	Session 8. Labour migration presentation	ILO - remote
12:30 – 13:30	LUNCH	
14:00 – 14.30	Session 7. Migration statistics - conceptual framework, concepts and definitions for production of international migration statistics	UNSD
14:30 – 15:00	Member State presentation + Q&A	Angola
15:00 – 16:00	Session 9. Data quality – recap of module 3 of admin data e-learning	CAD
16.00 – 16:30	Member State presentation + Q&A	Malawi
16:30	BREAK	
DAY 3: 19 March 2025		
09:00 – 09:45	Member State presentation + Q&A	Tanzania
09.45 – 10.15	Member State presentation + Q&A	Madagascar
10:15 – 11:00	Session 10. Migration statistics: data sources + regional context	UNSD
11:00 – 11:30	BREAK	
11:30 – 12:30	Review of mapping tool submissions by Member States and answering questions	CAD
12:30 – 13:00	Session 11. Formalizing data sharing and legal frameworks (module 5 of admin data e-learning)	CAD
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH	
14:00 – 14:45	Session 12. Data confidentiality and security (module 6 of admin data e-learning)	CAD / IOM
14:45 – 15:15	Member State presentation + Q&A	South Africa
15:15 – 15:45	Member State presentation + Q&A	DRC

15:45 – 16:15	Member State presentation + Q&A	Eswatini
16:30	BREAK	
DAY 4: 20 March 2025		
09:00 – 09:30	Session 13. Data interoperability and linking (module 6 of admin data e-learning)	CAD
09:30 – 10:00	Member State presentation + Q&A	Botswana
10:00 – 10:30	Member State presentation + Q&A	Mozambique
10:30 – 11:00	BREAK	
11:00 – 12:00	Session 15. Migration statistics exercises: Core migration stock statistics (1.1 and 1.2) and Core migration flow statistics (1.3 and 1.4) – assessment of data gaps and methodological challenges	UNSD
12:00 – 12:30	Plenary summaries on Member State findings	UNSD
12:30 – 13:00	Member State presentation + Q&A	Zimbabwe
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH	
14:00 – 14:30	Member State presentation + Q&A	Seychelles
14:30 – 15:30	Session 16. Member State teams sit together to plan roadmap in follow-up from the workshop	UNSD
15:30 – 16:30	Session 16 (continued). Presentation of roadmaps per Member State	All
16:30	BREAK	
DAY 5: 21 March 2025		
09:00 – 10:00	Session 16 (continued). Presentation of roadmaps per Member State	All
10:00 – 10:30	SADC presents path forward	SADC
10:30 – 11:00	BREAK	
11:00 – 12:00	Workshop evaluation	All
12:00 – 12:30	Closing	
12:30 – 13:30	LUNCH / END	