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**Items for discussion and decision: refugee statistics****Report of the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS)****Note by the Secretary-General**

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2017/228 and past practices, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of EGRIS on progress in the work on statistics on refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Following decision 47/111, the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS) was established with the mandate to develop International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics (IRRS) and a Technical Report outlining the way forward in development of comparable international standards for IDP statistics. The two documents address the need for international standards and improved comparability and quality of data on refugees, asylum seekers, and IDPs. They aim at increasing capacity at all levels and address the common challenges existing in measuring the numbers and characteristics of refugees and IDPs by providing standardised measures and indicators, and recommendations on integrating statistical systems. The Commission is invited to discuss and adopt the IRRS as well as the Technical Report on the Statistics of IDPs. Furthermore, the Commission is invited to discuss and reaffirm the way forward of the EGRIS as suggested in paragraph 58.

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\* E/CN.3/2018/1.

## Report of the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS)

### I. Introduction

1. At its forty-sixth session in March 2015, Statistics Norway and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) presented a joint report on statistics on refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) (E/CN.3/2015/9). The report highlighted several challenges associated with the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics on refugees, asylum seekers, and IDPs, including the lack of consistent terminology, need for adequate data sources, and difficulties in comparing international statistics on refugees and IDPs.
2. The authors of the report suggested to organize an international conference which would bring together international organisations and experts from national statistical offices with the aim to stimulate discussions on the existing challenges, to identify priorities and potential solutions to address these challenges, and to explore how best to incorporate statistics on refugees and IDPs into national statistical systems. They also expressed the need to work on international recommendations on refugee statistics, following a similar approach as the *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration Revision*, and a complementary manual with practical guidance for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data on these populations.<sup>1</sup> In its decision 46/104, the Statistical Commission supported the proposal to organize an international conference and acknowledged the need for international recommendations and a related handbook with practical guidance.
3. In follow-up to the Commission's decision 46/104, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT), Statistics Norway, UNHCR, Eurostat and the Statistical Office of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) organized an international conference in Antalya, Turkey, in October 2015. While recognizing the importance of improving statistics on IDPs, participants at the conference focused on refugees and asylum seekers. During the conference, it was agreed that refugee statistics should form an integral part of national statistics and that there is a need to better understand stocks and flows of refugees and asylum seekers. It was acknowledged that building more efficient information systems, serving both administrative and official statistics needs, and improving comparability between national and international figures, constitute major issues to be addressed<sup>2</sup>.
4. At the Commission's forty-seventh session in March 2016, the outcomes of the conference and the way forward to address the common challenges in refugee statistics, which were identified and agreed upon during the conference, were presented in a report by Statistics Norway, Turkstat, Eurostat and UNHCR. The suggestions made by the authors of the report included to establish a committee of experts on refugee statistics and to start the development of international recommendations on refugee statistics and a related compilers manual<sup>3</sup>.
5. The Commission, in its decisions 47/111, agreed to establish an *Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics* (EGRIS), by acknowledging the need to develop standards and improved systems on refugee statistics and at the same time expressing the need to also include IDPs in the scope of the work. The overall mandate of the EGRIS was therefore decided to be focused on developing international recommendations and guidance on refugee statistics and to advance discussions on standards for IDP statistics.
6. Based on the decision by the Commission, a Steering Committee, consisting of Statistics Norway, Eurostat, and UNHCR, was established and terms of reference for the work of the EGRIS were developed and approved by the Bureau of the Statistical Commission in July 2016<sup>4</sup>. Membership in the group has been open for all national statistical offices and

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<sup>1</sup> The full report submitted to the Commission can be found here: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc15/2015-9-RefugeeStats-E.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> The full report of the conference can be found here:

<http://www.efta.int/sites/default/files/documents/statistics/ESCoP/Conference%20Report%20Antalya%20%28final%29.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> The full report submitted to the Commission can be found here: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/2016-14-Refugee-statistics-E.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> The terms of reference can be found here: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1001617/7723880/terms-of-reference-refugee->

international organisations. The EGRIS in its current form consists of the Steering Committee, statistical authorities from more than thirty countries and territories<sup>5</sup>, and almost twenty regional/international organizations<sup>6</sup>.

7. The decision mandated the expert group to develop the following deliverables:

- A set of *International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics* (IRRS), which can be used as a reference guide for national and international work concerning statistics on refugees and asylum seekers [submitted to the Commission at its 49<sup>th</sup> session].
- A *Refugee Statistics Compilers Manual*, with operational instructions on how to collect statistics on refugees and asylum seekers [to be submitted to the Commission at its 50<sup>th</sup> session].
- A *Technical Report* outlining a way forward for the development of comparable international standards for statistics on IDPs [submitted to the Commission at its 49<sup>th</sup> session].

8. By now, the EGRIS has had two face-to-face meetings. During the first meeting in Copenhagen, November 2016, the proposed structure of the IRRS and the Technical Report on the Statistics of IDPs was reviewed and chapter groups were established to draft the various chapters of the IRRS. A separate IDP sub-group was established to work on the Technical Report on the Statistics of IDPs. The Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS)<sup>7</sup> was asked by the Steering Committee to lead the IDP sub-group with support from Statistics Norway and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) as co-leads. During the second meeting in Oslo, April 2017, the substance and structure of the various chapters of the documents were discussed in more detail as well as the concrete recommendations to be included in the IRRS. A third face-to-face meeting was held involving only the members of the IDP sub-group in Geneva, August 2017, where a set of recommendations on IDP statistics was developed to be included in the Technical Report.

9. The EGRIS has now finalized and submitted the IRRS and the Technical Report on the Statistics of IDPs to the Statistical Commission for consideration and approval at its forty-ninth session. After adoption of the current documents, the expert group will continue its work on refugee and IDP statistics and focus on the development of the Refugee Statistics Compilers Manual, and refined recommendations on IDP Statistics. Additionally, the Steering Committee agreed that it would be beneficial to extend the mandate of the EGRIS to also develop a Compilers Manual on IDP Statistics. This would be of added value for the statistical community and address the clear need for more action and better, evidence-based programmes addressing the needs of a growing IDP population, using the momentum created by the work of the EGRIS. The Compilers Manuals will contain more concrete operational instructions on implementing the proposed recommendations and shall be submitted to the Statistical Commission for adoption at its fiftieth session in March 2019.

## II. Background

10. With the growing prominence of forced displacement internationally, there is an increasing interest at national and international levels in statistics on refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs, including complete, accurate, timely and internationally comparable estimates of the numbers of forcibly displaced persons. Estimates of conflict-induced

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[statistics.pdf](#)

<sup>5</sup> Countries and territories include: Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo (All references to Kosovo in this paper should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (99)), Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Somalia, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, UK, Ukraine, US

<sup>6</sup> International organisations include: European Commission DG Home and DG Employment, EASO, EFTA Statistical Office, ESCWA, Eurostat, IDMC, IOM, JIPS, OECD, MED-HIMS, Medstat, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, UNSD, WB, WFP

<sup>7</sup> The Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) is an inter-agency service which was established in 2009 and is concerned with profiling in internal displacement situations. The focus of JIPS is to provide support to a variety of actors in implementing profiling exercises, including field support, capacity-building, and provision of tools and guidelines. (<http://www.jips.org/en/home>)

population flows are increasingly relevant for official population statistics, which need to include forcibly displaced populations in a consistent manner. Incomplete or inadequate statistics on these populations undermine the estimation of population stocks and flows (migratory and other), which in turn affects other statistics, particularly those that are population based.

11. Robust statistics on refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs are also critical for informed decision-making, which ultimately impacts the lives of vulnerable populations. There is a range of potential users of statistics on these populations, including local and national authorities, and international organisations. Data on refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs are necessary to better understand the phenomenon of forced displacement, to analyse its impacts, to measure changes over time and to provide an adequate response. Quality statistics also provide the requisite evidence to support: (a) better policy formulation and sound decision-making to address the challenges of forced displacement; (b) more effective monitoring, evaluation and accountability of policies and programs; and (c) enhanced public debate and advocacy.

12. However, existing principles and recommendations on vital statistics, population and housing censuses, and international migration statistics only address forced displacement peripherally. The need to enhance the comparability of international migration statistics (including statistics on asylum-seekers and refugees) was first addressed in 1953, when the United Nations (UN) published *International Migration Statistics*. In 1976, the UNSC adopted *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration* to encourage countries to collect, tabulate and disseminate statistics on migrants and to enhance international comparability. In 1998, the recommendations were revised and expanded to include, among others, specific guidelines for the compilation of statistical information on asylum-seekers. However, the recommendations do not address large movements of refugees or IDPs.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, many refugees are not international migrants and refugees and IDPs have specific protection needs which warrant dedicated statistics.

13. It was therefore necessary to develop a set of specific recommendations that countries and international organisations can use to improve the collection, collation, disaggregation, reporting, and overall quality of statistics on forcibly displaced populations. The objective of these recommendations is “to improve statistics on an important aspect of international migration and to improve common information about a situation with a significant impact on global welfare”<sup>9</sup>.

14. The *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* adopted by the General Assembly in 2016 recognizes the importance of improved data collection, particularly by national authorities. It calls for enhanced international cooperation to improve data collection on refugees and migrants, including capacity building for national authorities. It notes 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, and that data collection should be consistent with national legislation on data protection and international privacy obligations<sup>10</sup>.

15. Furthermore, several UN Resolutions have emphasized the importance of reliable data on IDPs in order to improve policy, programming and response, to ensure protection of human rights of IDPs, and to support durable solutions to displacement. These resolutions also make specific recommendations for governments to seek relevant expertise to ensure availability of reliable IDP data.<sup>11</sup>

16. Lastly, the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) stress the need for capacity-building and improved statistics,

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<sup>8</sup> Revised version of the *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration* can be found here:

[https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesM/SeriesM\\_58rev1e.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesM/SeriesM_58rev1e.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> United Nations. (2015). *Report of Statistics Norway, the Turkish Statistical Institute, Eurostat and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on progress in the work on statistics on refugees and internally displaced*. Economic and Social Council, Statistical Commission. New York: United Nations.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations. (2016). *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 September 2016*. New York: United Nations.

<sup>11</sup> UN Human Rights Council Resolutions ([A/HRC/20/L.14](#)) from June 2012 and ([A/HRC/RES/32/11](#)) from July 2016 on the Human Rights of IDPs; UN General Assembly Resolutions ([A/C.3/68/L.63/Rev.1](#)) from November 2013 and ([A/RES/70/165](#)) from December 2015 on the Protection and Assistance of IDPs

including increased availability of “high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts” (SDG 17.18)<sup>12</sup>. Specific recommendations on refugee, asylum seeker, and IDP statistics can serve as a critical instrument to enhance the statistical capacity of national authorities, thereby strengthening the evidence base for decision-making on the protection and assistance of refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs. At the same time, improved statistics, including adequate disaggregation, in this area will enhance measuring progress towards the achievement of the SDGs with specific focus on vulnerable populations groups.

### III. Process of developing the documents

17. The IRRS and the Technical Report on the Statistics of IDPs, which are shared as background documents in connection with this report, have been developed in a collaborative effort by the members of the EGRIS and with guidance by the Steering Committee. EGRIS membership was open to all national and international authorities and organisations with a stake in refugee and/or IDP statistics. The current EGRIS members represent a great variety of regions and contexts and include a mix of members who joined the group out of their own interest and members who were specifically invited to join due to their known experience with refugee or IDP populations, their specific capacity, and/or to cover additional geographic or developmental areas.

18. UNHCR and JIPS served as secretariat of the group and were in charge of coordinating the work around the IRRS (UNHCR) and the Technical Report on the Statistics of IDPs (JIPS) in consultation with the Steering Committee and chapter co-leads. The work on the IRRS was mostly driven by the members of the Steering Committee (UNHCR, Eurostat, Statistics Norway), while the Technical Report on the Statistics of IDPs was led by JIPS with support from IDMC and Statistics Norway as co-chairs and chapter leads. Chapter groups around the different chapters of the IRRS and a sub-group for the IDP report were established during the first EGRIS face-to-face meeting and chapter leads were selected to be in charge of coordinating the work of the chapter groups.

19. However, the entire group of experts was invited to provide input and feedback throughout the process, especially to ensure that different regions and contexts are reflected in the recommendations. As the expert group includes more than 30 national statistical authorities, various country-specific examples could be identified and included as case examples in the recommendations and technical report, illustrating how statistics on refugees and IDPs can be integrated into national statistical systems. The ultimate goal was to ensure that the final recommendations are relevant and useful to the various national statistical authorities as well as to regional and international organisations.

20. Two face-to-face EGRIS meetings and an additional IDP sub-group meeting were held to have more advanced discussions on the content of the documents and to reach agreement on outstanding issues and the final recommendations. Furthermore, two draft versions were circulated for comprehensive feedback within the group, and there has been extensive communication with the members of the expert group to discuss the contents of the two documents.

21. The Steering Committee served as advisory board throughout the process and tried to clarify questions and comments received. However, it should be stressed that the final deliverables are not reflecting the position of the Steering Committee or any other single organisation/ authority, but consolidate the understanding and consensus of the members of the entire EGRIS.

22. A Global Consultation was conducted and facilitated by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat from 10<sup>th</sup> November to 10<sup>th</sup> December 2017, inviting all relevant authorities and offices of UN member states to provide feedback and comments on the final draft versions of the IRRS and the Technical Report on the Statistics of IDPs. Afterwards, the documents were modified accordingly and edited for final submission to the Commission.

<sup>12</sup> See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg17>

#### **IV. International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics**

##### **A. The need for international recommendations on refugee statistics**

23. Statistics on refugees and asylum-seekers are published at regular frequencies by national authorities as well as regional and international organisations, such as UNHCR and Eurostat. In many countries, the collection and publication of the statistics is undertaken by UNHCR on behalf of the country, until the country has the capacity to produce its own statistics. There is a clear need for capacity-building and for addressing the challenges associated with the collection, compilation and presentation of data on refugees and asylum-seekers that affect the quality of published statistics. Those are crucial for informed decision making and evidence-based policies and programmes which adequately serve the needs of these populations.

24. One existing challenge is the lack of comparability of statistics on refugees and asylum-seekers produced by different countries and across displacement situations. This arises due to the inconsistency of terminology, concepts, definitions and classifications, as well as variation in the methods of data collection, compilation and presentation at national and international level. Data on refugees and asylum-seekers are typically collected for administrative rather than statistical purposes, and the definitions employed reflect country-specific legislation, policies and practices.

25. In line with this, there is also a need to more effectively differentiate conceptually between international migrants and refugees. In some situations, refugees might be seen as a sub-group of migrants, however, legally, protection-wise, as well as statistically, a refugee is not adequately covered under the term 'migrant' and in some situations, refugees are clearly not migrants at all (e.g. most Palestine refugees). This is also why there is a need for concrete recommendations on refugee statistics in addition to the already existing *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration*.

26. There is a necessity to improve the understanding of the concepts of flows and stocks of refugees and asylum-seekers, and to build efficient information systems that can serve both administrative and official statistics needs. Measurement of forced population movements in humanitarian crises presents unique technical, operational, and political challenges, affecting the accuracy and reliability of available data. Refugees and asylum-seekers are highly mobile, especially in on-going humanitarian crises, and population distributions can change rapidly, which affects sampling frames for surveys, for example.

27. There are several gaps in official statistics, including a lack of basic demographic data on asylum-seekers and socio-economic data on refugees. The availability of data on basic characteristics of these populations would permit analysis of their socio-economic well-being relative to general migrants and the general population, and their degree of integration. There is also a need to maximize the use of available data sources (e.g. by integrating questions on reasons for migration and refugee status into censuses and other survey instruments) while at the same time advancing the use of new data sources (e.g. spatial or big data).

28. There is limited connection between national statistics on refugees and asylum-seekers, often managed within immigration authorities, and national statistics on migration and population. Additionally, there are significant variations across countries in terms of the size of forcibly displaced populations, the capacities of the national statistical and administrative systems, and national policy priorities. In particular, capacity constraints in developing countries limit the scope and effectiveness of data collection and dissemination activities.

29. It is also acknowledged that humanitarian and development approaches need to be aligned with each other and that actors working in these areas need to collaborate more effectively in order to facilitate, for example, a smooth transition from emergency situations to durable solutions for displaced populations. Working on international recommendations for refugee statistics by specifically involving national statistical authorities and building on their capacity, helps to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development work as better statistics will be produced to address the needs of persons of concern in the short-term and long-term.

30. Lastly, the extreme sensitivity of refugee and asylum-seeker data and the importance of confidentiality and data

protection in refugee statistics may limit the access of statisticians to information in administrative systems.

## **B. Outline of the International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics**

31. Based on the identified challenges, including the need for international standards and capacity-building on refugee and asylum seeker statistics, it was decided to develop the IRRS. The IRRS aim at addressing the existing gaps, by looking into and providing recommendations and standards around the following elements:

- The legal framework and refugee definitions
- Defining refugees and refugee related populations for the purpose of statistical measurement
- Measuring the number of refugees
- Measuring wellbeing and integration of refugees and refugee related populations
- Coordination and strengthening systems of refugee statistics

32. In the recommendations, statistical definitions of the refugee population in scope and the relevant stock and flow measures are elaborated. Issues resolved in the IRRS include the difference between migrants and refugees and the principle that, while recognizing that there is some overlap when producing statistics, refugees are not simply a subset of migrants and, in some cases, may not even be migrants at all. Additionally, three categories have been developed to describe the different subsets of the population in scope, including persons in need of international protection, persons with a refugee background, and persons returned from abroad after seeking international protection.

33. The minimum set of classificatory variables, basic statistics and key indicators, to be collected and reported on the different population groups, have been defined in the recommendations. The concepts and classifications on refugees and asylum-seekers are translated into core questions that enable the identification of these populations in data sources in a practical and cost-effective way. Because of the complexity of legal definitions in this area, simplification was needed to arrive at a workable sequence of questions which can be used in surveys and censuses.

34. The recommendations include some concrete discussions around the usefulness of indicators derived from general household and labour force surveys in providing meaningful results for refugees, considering the need for disaggregation by refugee status and an adequate sample size and design. It is also recommended that surveys and censuses include refugee camps in their sampling frames. Furthermore, the possibility of data matching, integration of survey and census data with administrative data, and record linkage using both country administrative data and register data from UNHCR and UNRWA, are addressed. The recommendations stress the need for an integrated data infrastructure.

35. The recommendations also include examples and guidance on assessing the well-being and integration of refugees and, in regards to this, take into consideration the importance of benchmark populations within the host country, including the general migrant population in the host country. The recommendations discuss the importance to standardize indicators of well-being and integration so that they are internationally comparable and allow an assessment of the success of integration efforts across regions and countries. A concrete list of recommended indicators for measuring wellbeing and integration, linked with the *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework* (CRRF) and the SDG indicators, is included in the recommendations.

36. Another topic covered by the recommendations is the coordination across national statistical systems spanning different statistical agencies and considering differences between centralized and decentralized systems. It is recommended that the NSO or primary statistical authority maintains overall responsibility for the integrity and validity of all official statistics and coordinates the process ensuring effective planning, coordination, and dissemination. Additionally, the need for having an appropriate national legal framework in place and adhering to the *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics* is stressed.

37. Recommendations are also made with respect to metadata standards, data sharing and dissemination of refugee statistics. Methods of evaluating statistical systems and quality assurance for refugee statistics are addressed. Examples from regional organisations, such as the UN regional economic commissions or the EU, are used to discuss existing recommendations on statistics and the different coordinating roles. Besides that, the need to engage ministers and senior politicians at the international and regional levels to elevate refugee statistics as a priority for political and government agendas is addressed.

38. The last chapter of the recommendations also looks at improving coordination in international and national systems and provides recommendations on establishing an appropriate governance body to ensure the harmonization of concepts, definitions, and reporting on refugee statistics. Member States should be included in these deliberations and a model which could be followed is that of the UN Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation.

## **V. Technical Report on the Statistics of IDPs**

### **A. The need for a way forward to internationally comparable standards on IDP statistics**

39. IDPs account for the largest share of displaced populations globally, and there is a growing recognition of the need for accurate and actionable data on IDPs to inform national response and support policy processes. However, statistics on IDPs face particular conceptual and measurement challenges, and guidance on this topic is currently scarce. Hence, there is potential to develop standards for more comparable and quality statistics on IDPs.

40. Among the few NSOs or NSSs that produce and publish statistics on internal displacement, notable variation in the specifications used for statistical measurement is evident. The reasons that drive IDP data collection differ from context to context and in the majority of contexts, much of the statistics collected on IDPs are gathered for operational purposes (e.g. for providing humanitarian assistance) and are often not defined as official statistics. Operational statistics on IDPs often simplify or distort specifications, are often collected by different actors with various needs, and are not systematically shared or reported on.

41. Another key challenge of IDP statistics is the operationalization of concepts that have themselves not yet been standardised. Various practices for translating the definition of an IDP into a statistically measurable unit exist due to differences in national legal frameworks and their applications in data collection. Though statistics in many contexts depart from the comprehensive definition of IDPs established in the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, important commonalities and a need for improved practice in this area exist. Developing a unified statistical framework for this population remains feasible and helps to provide clarity on conceptual challenges across contexts and improve comparability of data.

42. For being useful for decision-making, statistics on IDPs need to be aligned, interoperable and of sufficient quality. This, however, requires clear standards and related tools for official statistics production. Determining whether a person is or is not internally displaced is an important first step of collecting quality IDP statistics. Collecting data on the characteristics of IDPs can also illuminate the socio-economic situation of these populations, thereby informing appropriate operational and policy response. Quality statistics on IDPs also allow for analysis of progress made towards the achievement of durable solutions to displacement to support the role of governments in providing protection and assistance to IDPs.

43. The production of official statistics requires effective coordination. Without coordination, data collection efforts can be duplicated, sometimes resulting in the existence of competing data and diverging results due to the use of incompatible specifications and measurements. Hence, effective mechanisms are required to align quality standards and regulate methodologies acceptable for official statistics, to ensure best use of resources, and to disseminate statistics on IDPs for all relevant users and the general public. Many different types of coordination mechanisms exist at the national level, differing in their mandate, composition and organisation. They also differ in how influential they are. The international coordination of IDP statistics today is limited, and current practice shows little comparability of statistics on



IDPs internationally. Similar to challenges observed at the national level, the way the international community defines and measures internal displacement internationally is not aligned.

44. While some initiatives exist, and several international organisations are committed to improving the production of quality statistics on IDPs, there has been no clear way forward yet. This is why the mandate of the EGRIS included the development of a Technical Report on the Statistics of IDPs, outlined below. With the Technical Report, this is the very first time that a collaborative effort has been taken to define a way forward towards the development of comparable international standards for statistics on IDPs and refinement of the first set of recommendations will be needed along the way, with the intention of resulting in a more detailed set of internationally agreed-upon recommendations on IDP statistics.

## **B. Outline of the Technical Report on the Statistics of IDPs**

45. Due to the difficulties in conceptualising and comparing the number of IDPs in statistical terms, the need for a Technical Report outlining the way forward to international standards on IDP Statistics was expressed and specifically requested by the Statistical Commission. Based on this, the Technical Report has been developed, taking stock of the following elements:

- The legal and policy framework
- Defining IDPs for the purpose of statistical measurement
- Collecting numbers of IDPs: considerations and sources
- Collecting IDP characteristics: challenges and applications
- Coordination systems at national and international levels
- Recommendations towards a statistical framework on IDPs

46. The Technical Report on the Statistics of IDPs primarily takes stock of the existing practice on collection of official IDP statistics. In addition, it makes recommendations towards a framework for IDP statistics with the intention of paving the way for the production of comparable, quality statistics on these populations across different contexts in the future.

47. As a starting point, the report takes the *UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* in order to define and delineate characteristics of IDPs in legal terms and how to translate these into statistically measurable terms. While the Guiding Principles, which are well reflected in regional and national laws and instruments, provide a good basis for arriving at a statistical definition, additional criteria are identified in the report to ensure that IDPs can be statistically differentiated from other population groups.

48. The report also discusses international data quality standards, as outlined, for example, in the *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics*, and the specific challenges related to the collection of comparable IDP statistics. It describes the differences between stock and flow measures in an IDP context and critically reflects on the variations of definitions used in current practice by national statistical authorities. It outlines the different context-specific challenges which hamper the collection of comparable and high-quality data on IDPs and proposes a way forward towards international standards on IDP statistics.

49. Furthermore, the report describes and makes recommendations on the way forward for using different data sources for the production of IDP statistics, including national censuses, administrative records and registers, surveys, as well as operational, qualitative, and big data. The report recommends different types of statistics to be collected on IDPs, including numbers and important characteristics to be considered in order to produce data that is relevant for effective policy making and response in IDP situations.

50. When looking at IDP characteristics, the report specifies how IDPs can be identified in official statistics and

reflects on the capacities of different data sources to do so. The report also provides examples of indicators that can be used to measure, for example progress towards durable solutions, and provides concrete resources for identifying relevant and comparable indicators to be measured. Furthermore, the need for comparative analysis to fully understand the displacement context is emphasized and elaborated on.

51. By providing a number of examples, the report addresses the importance of coordination on national and international level in order to improve IDP statistics. It stresses the role of national strategies for the development of statistics (NSDSs) and yearly statistical plans in helping to mainstream the production of IDP statistics and enhance the availability of comparative data with non-displaced populations. Including IDP statistics in NSS mandates will facilitate adherence to international statistical quality standards, even when the primary focal point for data production is not a statistical agency.

52. The report stresses the responsibility of national governments to organise statistical production and provide capacity for it through human resources, training, and funding. However, it is acknowledged that the international community should support the development of quality statistics on displacement. The intention is to establish participatory and transparent processes that build on best practices for the production of statistics, and further to establish cooperation between displacement-affected areas and international organisations, as well as between countries facing similar challenges.

53. The Technical Report also draws on technical elements of the IRRS and vice versa. While the Technical Report on the Statistics of IDPs and the IRRS are two separate documents, they built on each other and cover some common elements, such as quality standards for statistics, the advantages and disadvantages of different data sources, the responsibilities on national level, as well as the importance of coordination within and between systems at national and international level.

## **VI. The way forward**

54. After adoption of the IRRS and the Technical Report on the Statistics of IDPs, the EGRIS will continue its work on refugee and IDP statistics and additional countries and organisations are invited to join the expert group and contribute to the next steps in the process, if they wish to. In the upcoming phase, the EGRIS aims at producing the following two deliverables:

- A Refugee Statistics Compilers Manual [to be submitted to the UNSC at its 50<sup>th</sup> session in March 2019]
- Refined Recommendations and a Compilers Manual with a set of Internationally Comparable Standards on IDP Statistics [to be submitted to the UNSC at its 50<sup>th</sup> session in March 2019]

55. The main goal of the EGRIS is to develop international recommendations on refugee and IDP statistics to be used by national statistical authorities and international actors alike. As part of these recommendations, internationally comparable indicators are developed, which will improve the quality and comparability of national and international statistics to provide a basis for evidence-based decision-making and planning on different levels. The Refugee and IDP Statistics Compilers Manuals will entail concrete operational instructions for national as well as regional statistical systems with the aim to advance statistical capacity at different levels and through the support of international partners.

56. The aim of the refugee and IDP statistics Compilers Manuals is to provide operational instructions on the implementation of the IRRS and the Technical Report on the Statistics of IDPs. Through concrete recommendations and guidance, both the Compilers Manuals and the Recommendations aim to strengthen national capacity in countries hosting asylum-seekers, refugees, and IDPs in collecting and disseminating high-quality statistics on these populations.

57. Independently from the official deliverables, members of the expert group also aim at engaging in concrete capacity-building activities in line with the recommendations and in support of those countries, which might face difficulties with implementing the standards.

**VII. Points for discussion**

58. The Commission is invited to discuss and adopt the following two background documents with implication for UN member states:

- International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics
- Technical Report on the Statistics of IDPs

59. Furthermore, the Commission is invited to discuss and approve the way forward of the EGRIS, particularly with regard to the following:

- Development of a Refugee Statistics Compilers Manual
- Development of refined recommendations on IDP Statistics and an extension of the EGRIS mandate to additionally develop an IDP Statistics Compilers Manual