

**Economic and Social Council**

Distr.: General

20 December 2018

Original: English

**Statistical Commission****Fiftieth session**

5 - 8 March 2019

Item 3(n) of the provisional agenda \*

**Items for discussion and decision: international migration statistics****International migration statistics****Report of the Secretary-General***Summary*

The present report is submitted in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2018/227 and past practices. It sets forth recent work undertaken by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the Expert Group on Migration Statistics in 2018 to fulfil the requests of the Statistical Commission contained in decisions 49/101. In particular, the report covers: (a) the central role given to data and to the Statistical Commission, by the recently adopted Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration; and (b) the work of the Statistics Division and the Expert Group on Migration Statistics on methodological developments, including on the revision of the *United Nations Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration*. Furthermore, the report describes other ongoing work including capacity building activities, as well as future priorities for the Statistics Division and the Expert Group on Migration Statistics to strengthening international migration statistics.

Points for discussion by the Commission include: (a) approving the proposed Terms of Reference of the Expert Group on Migration Statistics; (b) express its views and adopt the national migration data infrastructure - a comprehensive framework that can be used for capacity development on international migration statistics; and (c) commenting and providing guidance on the ongoing work and future priorities on migration statistics.

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\* E/CN.3/2019/1.

## I. Introduction

1. More people than ever live in a different country from the one in which they were born. Furthermore, new migration patterns are appearing: modern communication technologies and the increased convenience of travel have made temporary and circular migration easier than ever; free movements within a region raise new measurement challenges even for countries with relatively developed statistical systems; from the perspective of countries of origin, building on the benefit of emigration is of paramount importance; in addition to better integration of immigrants in countries of destination, large numbers of returned migrants also raise the question of how they could be re-integrated in the countries of origin.

2. Increases in migration and changing patterns of migration have raised demand to capture such phenomena with accurate and timely data. Calls for better data were made by Member States through global initiatives such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/70/1), the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/71/1), the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (add a reference once adopted) and the Global Compact on Refugees (add a reference) pointing to the need to strengthen national capacities to collect and use migration statistics to develop evidence-based migration policies and to guide the integration of migration into national development planning.

3. Despite the unprecedented needs, statistics on international migration remain sparse. Basic statistics on migrants stocks<sup>1</sup> and flows are lacking in many countries. For instance, while population censuses are being conducted in most countries and information on international migration is being collected<sup>2</sup>, statistics on migrant stock since 2005 are only available for 125 countries at the global level. Migrant stock data disaggregated by additional characteristics such as sex, age, country of origin and education are available in fewer countries.<sup>3</sup> Data on migration flows are even scarcer.<sup>4</sup> Data on the size of emigration flows and stocks and their characteristics, which are of particular relevance to countries of origin, are almost non-existent. Through the Statistics Division Demographic Yearbook data collection<sup>5</sup> from national statistics offices (NSOs), only 49 countries and areas have provided data on migration flows at least once since 2011 for at least one migration table. In brief, the number of countries and areas which could provide flow statistics of international migration to the Division remains low. Additional statistics that capture the complexity of migration rarely exist, e.g., there is no international definition of circular and temporary migration and internationally comparable statistics are not available<sup>6</sup>. Measuring movements within a region that implements free-movement policies is particularly challenging. Moreover, other than the overall estimate of remittances flows, other dimensions of the economic and social impact and contribution of migrants are not consistently measured in countries.

4. Producing disaggregated data, including by sex, age and other key characteristics of migrants, to respond to the requirement in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of leaving no-one behind, raises additional methodological challenges, including in terms of capturing smaller population groups as well as in adopting

<sup>1</sup> According to the current internationally agreed definition of migrant, the 'stock of migrants' is in fact composed by all persons who have experienced a migration (i.e., a change of their usual residence) during their life, and it should more properly be referred to as the 'number of persons ever resided abroad'. However, its measure is often approximated by using proxy variables such as country of birth and/or citizenship, and 'migrants stock' is a widespread label. 'Migrants stock' is thus used in assessing data availability.

<sup>2</sup> 178 of 183 countries or areas for which national questionnaires for the 2010 round (2005-2014) are available included at least one question on international migration.

<sup>3</sup> Between 2005 and 2014, data on immigrants stock, as measured by the number of foreign-born or foreign population in a country, are available only in 125 out of 178 countries or areas that collected migration information in population censuses. When data are further disaggregated by country of birth or citizenship, the number of countries or areas with available data is 100. When data are disaggregated by educational attainment of migrants, only 51 countries or areas have such data. Note that some countries might still have data available but not yet reported to the United Nations.

<sup>4</sup> Note that some countries might still have data available but not yet reported to the United Nations. Data for the European countries are compiled by Eurostat and are not included in the analysis.

<sup>5</sup> Annual questionnaires sent to countries are available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dybquest.htm>

<sup>6</sup> A regional statistical definition of circular migration has been developed by United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (<https://www.unecce.org/index.php?id=44717>) and data are currently being collected by Eurostat.

methods that reflect issues pertaining to those subpopulation groups properly.

5. Therefore, the challenges in producing statistics that reflect the complexity of migration and that inform national policies are multifaceted. They range from insufficient international standards and methodologies, lack of harmonization, compilation and dissemination of statistics that are already collected, a lack of coordination and integration of migration statistics generated from multiple sources within the country, as well as lack of systematic analysis and research that help understand the determinants and impact of migration in countries of origin, transition and destination.

6. While non-traditional (big data) sources such as mobile phones records, earth observations and social media are proposed as potential sources of migration data, yet no concrete case study is available to shed light on how they can be used to improve the availability of migration statistics for policy making.

7. The present report sets forth recent work undertaken by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the Expert Group on Migration Statistics in 2018 to improve migration statistics, in the context of: (a) the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration; and (b) methodological developments and capacity building initiatives, including the revision of the *United Nations Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration*. Furthermore, the report describes the ongoing work and future priorities for the Statistics Division and the Expert Group on Migration Statistics to strengthening international migration statistics.

## II. The Expert Group on Migration Statistics

8. The Expert Group on Migration Statistics is a group of subject-matter experts from national statistical offices and migration-relevant line ministries of countries, international, regional and sub-regional organisations and other independent experts. The Group first met in June 2017 and discussed data needs and methodological issues related to statistics on international migration, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The main focus of that meeting was to discuss and agree on the definition of migratory status for SDG data disaggregation and to identify a list of relevant SDG indicators to be disaggregated by migratory status for global monitoring.<sup>7</sup>

9. The work of the Expert Group was welcomed by the United Nations Statistical Commission during its 49<sup>th</sup> Session in March 2018, when it further recommended that the Group continues its work on improving statistics on international migration, by advancing methodologies to measure the phenomenon including through the revision of the 1998 *United Nations Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration*.<sup>8</sup>

10. As of November 2018, the Expert Group consists of representatives from 20 countries, 18 international and regional organisations and 4 independent experts. Main activities of the Group include (a) providing guidance and technical support to advance methodologies related to migration statistics, including the revision of the *United Nations Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration*; (b) supporting activities that address data gaps and national needs for capacity development on migration statistics; and (c) facilitating coordination among regional and international agencies on the development of methods as well as capacity building activities to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure efforts at national level are aligned.

11. The Expert Group will work through physical and online meetings. Work carried out by the Expert Group since July 2017 is described in the following sections, whenever applicable. The terms of reference for the Expert Group is available in Annex 1.

<sup>7</sup> Documents of the 2017 Expert Group Meeting are available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/meetings/2017/new-york--egm-migration-data>.

<sup>8</sup> E/2018/24-E/CN.3/2018/37, decision 49/101(j)

### III. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: implications for migration statistics

12. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) was recently adopted in Marrakech, Morocco in December 2018. The Global Compact is the first-ever UN global agreement on a common approach to international migration in all its dimensions and represents a historic opportunity to improve international cooperation on migration, and to strengthen the contribution of migrants and migration to sustainable development. GCM contains twenty-three objectives, among which the first one is dedicated to migration statistics and calls for the collection and utilization of accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies.

13. Following the request of the Statistical Commission in its decision 49/101, the Bureau of the Statistical Commission followed closely the negotiations of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration from April to July 2018 and provided guidance to the negotiations on issues related to statistics, in particular under objective one.

14. Objective 1 of the Global Compact gives an important role to the Statistical Commission, in terms of harmonizing methodologies; and in reviewing regularly a global programme, to be developed, to strengthen national capacities to collect, analyse and disseminate migration data.<sup>9</sup> The Global Compact also provides a comprehensive policy framework to help countries and the global statistical community in better understanding the data needs and related data gaps for evidence-based policymaking.

### IV. Methodological developments on migration statistics

#### A. SDG indicators relevant to migrants and migration

15. The first meeting of the Expert Group on Migration Statistics in June 2017 agreed on the definition of migratory status for SDG data disaggregation at the global level and on the list of SDG indicators for data disaggregation by migratory status for global monitoring.<sup>10</sup> The Expert Group further recommended that a technical report on measuring migration-relevant SDG indicators be prepared to provide guidance on how to produce and use data on migration-relevant SDG indicators. The Technical Report would also cover definitions and metadata and identify currently available and potentially usable data for indicators to be disaggregated by migratory status. A draft version of the Technical Report was prepared by the Statistics Division and was circulated for consultation with relevant custodian agencies of SDG indicators and members of the Expert Group. Furthermore, a mapping exercise was recently launched by the European Commission's MEDSTAT IV project to assess how many SDG indicators identified by the Expert Group can be compiled based on data available in the project countries. Results of this exercise will be included in the Technical Report.

16. Feedback received on the draft Technical Report points to the need for further development of methodologies in two specific areas, in order to produce data disaggregated by migratory status. The first focuses on special sampling strategies to ensure representativeness of migrants covered in multi-purpose household surveys and the second addressing the need to integrate household survey data with data collected through administrative sources or from population censuses. These two streams of methodological work will be undertaken by the Statistics Division and partners, under the guidance of the Expert Group. Feedback also pointed out to the need for identifying a list of gender-responsive and child-sensitive indicators that are relevant for migration and migrants.

17. Finally, guidance provided in the draft Technical Report will also be tested in upcoming capacity building activities in countries. Once finalized, the Technical Report will be shared with the IAEG-SDG group to ensure wide dissemination and use for SDG data disaggregation by migratory status.

<sup>9</sup> Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

([https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180713\\_agreed\\_outcome\\_global\\_compact\\_for\\_migration.pdf](https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180713_agreed_outcome_global_compact_for_migration.pdf))

<sup>10</sup> The recommendation of the 2017 Expert Group Meeting is available at [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/meetings/2017/new-york--egm-migration-data/EGM%20Recommendations\\_FINAL.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/meetings/2017/new-york--egm-migration-data/EGM%20Recommendations_FINAL.pdf)

## **B. Guidance note on a set of standard questions on international migration for population censuses and sample surveys**

18. In an effort to improving the quality and comparability of international migration statistics collected through national population censuses and sample surveys, a guidance note was prepared by the Statistics Division, with feedback from the Expert Group on Migration Statistics, on a set of standard questions on international migration. The guidance note was prepared on the basis of a comprehensive review of national census questionnaires<sup>11</sup> for the 2010 round of population and housing censuses. However, much of its content also applies to household surveys.

19. The guidance note covers two sets of questions. The first set relates to questions that distinguish migrants from non-migrants, including questions on (a) country of birth, (b) country of citizenship, (c) country of birth of parents, (d) household members who have ever resided abroad, and (e) household members currently residing abroad. The second set of questions seeks information about key characteristics of migrants. These questions focus on (a) year or period of arrival in the country, (b) acquisition of citizenship, and (c) reason for migration.

20. The set of questions were also reviewed and considered for use in future surveys by national and international experts working under the regional programme called Households International Migration Surveys in the Mediterranean Countries (MED-HIMS), implemented under the guidance of the European Commission and other international organisations<sup>12</sup>. Additional testing of the questions will potentially be carried out by UNICEF in its MICS surveys at the beginning of 2019.

21. Once the guideline note is finalised based on results of further testing and feedbacks from countries, the Statistics Division will work with relevant partners including IOM, UNFPA and UNICEF to distribute it widely for use in countries.

## **C. Revision of the UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration**

22. The revision of the *UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration* is underway. A number of consultative meetings were organised with members of the Expert Group on Migration Statistics and additional countries in Asia and Europe. Those meetings aimed to solicit feedbacks from countries on their experience with *the Recommendations* and seek suggestions for their revision. Major issues being discussed include (a) the trade-off between being a conceptual or practical publication; (b) the need for building stronger linkage to data needs for policymaking and providing guidance on data analysis and data use; (c) revisiting the concept and definition of international migrant; (d) covering new migration patterns and new data sources; and (e) incorporating relevant frameworks such as the *International Recommendation on Refugee Statistics* and the new ILO Guidelines concerning statistics on international labour migration, while ensuring harmonization across them.

23. Further consultations with countries in other regions will be carried out subsequently. A draft annotated outline is available as a background document. The revision will be carried out by the Statistics Division and the Expert Group on Migration Statistics and the first draft is expected to be available in 2021 for global consultation.

## **V. Capacity building activities**

### **A. National migration data infrastructure - a comprehensive framework for capacity development on international migration statistics**

24. In response to the mandate given by the Statistical Commission to its Bureau and the Statistics Division to support the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration negotiation, the Statistics Division, under the guidance of the Bureau of the Statistical Commission, developed a comprehensive framework for capacity

<sup>11</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/census/document-resources/>

<sup>12</sup> In collaboration with ILO, IOM, UNHCR and the World Bank,

development on international migration statistics, based on a proposed national migration data infrastructure (Annex 2).<sup>13</sup> A national migration data infrastructure is a platform that brings together key stakeholders in the country including main users of migration data such as policy makers, private sector, research and training institutions, and civil society and data producers from the national statistical office and the statistical units of other relevant ministries.

25. According to the country-specific situation, a national migration data infrastructure should be led by an interagency coordination body that will coordinate efforts among all entities within the infrastructure.<sup>14</sup> The data infrastructure starts with an assessment of data needs for national migration policy and completes with proper dissemination and uses of data for policy purposes. Guided by national migration data policy and the open data principle, the data infrastructure should have an agreed architecture for inter-related databases for migration data that can be used by policy makers. These data are robust, consistent, of high-quality and inter-operable. This network of databases will form the core of data support to drive policy making on migration.

#### **B. Initial assessment of national needs for capacity building**

26. As a first step to help better understanding the national needs to strengthen statistics on international migration, the Statistics Division conducted a survey among 20 countries, who are members of the Expert Group on Migration Statistics, on their needs for capacity building.<sup>15</sup>

27. Analysis of the responses from 12 countries showed that the most challenging areas requiring international support are: producing data on drivers and impact of migration; the use of administrative records for migration data especially through border records and visas issuance; integration of data sources; and use of migration data to inform policies. In terms of population censuses, while most countries have already included or are planning to include core migration topics such as country of birth, citizenship and duration of stay in their 2020 round of censuses, data analysis and dissemination are more challenging. Also, asking the question on reason for migration has not been very common in countries. The use of new data sources including big data was also indicated as challenging for countries and warrant international assistance. Other areas that are found less challenging but still require international attention include: applying internationally agreed definitions and standards on migration statistics, collecting migration data through surveys, producing migration profiles and elaborating and implementing a comprehensive national strategy for improving migration data, in some countries.

28. This assessment provides an initial overview of the needs of countries in the Expert Group on Migration Statistics in terms of international support to strengthen their migration statistics systems. More in-depth assessments will be carried out using a Toolkit<sup>16</sup> developed by the Statistics Division, in consultation with the Expert Group on Migration Statistics. The toolkit consists of a set of questions that were developed based on national migration data infrastructure described in Section A above.

#### **C. Ongoing capacity building activities to improve migration statistics**

<sup>13</sup> Will be available as a background document entitled “National migration data infrastructure - a comprehensive framework for capacity development on international migration statistics”.

<sup>14</sup> Activities to be covered by the interagency coordination body may include (a) assess gaps in migration data for effective policymaking; (b) facilitate integration of migration into other areas; (c) enhance data flows within the national statistical system including establishing the necessary legal framework for data sharing; (d) improve synergy on concepts, definitions and data collection and dissemination methods; and (e) coordinate methodological development on producing timely, reliable and policy-relevant statistics on international migration.

<sup>15</sup> The survey questionnaire will be available as a background document, entitled “Needs assessment among national statistical offices and line ministries working with migration data”. The survey is in line with data requirements covered in objective 1 of the final draft of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

<sup>16</sup> Will be available as a background document entitled “The toolkit to assess national migration data capacity”.

29. In 2018, the Statistics Division launched the eleventh tranche of the Development Account project entitled “Collection and use of international migration data in the context of the 2030 Agenda”. The four-year project is led by the Statistics Division, in collaboration with the UN Population Division, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The guidelines on the production of migration-relevant Sustainable Development Goal indicators, requested by the Expert Group on Migration Statistics as described in paragraph 15 above, will be one of the key outputs of the project. The guidelines will be used in capacity-building activities for countries in Asia and Latin America together with other United Nations publications related to migration statistics<sup>17</sup>, as well as the Toolkit for capacity building described in section B above. The Development account project also covers capacity building activities to help countries in reporting data for SDG indicator 16.2.2, on the total number of victims of trafficking in persons.

30. Capacity building activities are also being carried out by other partner entities. For example, since 1996, the European Commission’s MEDSTAT programme has been working with Mediterranean countries to improve migration data collection, including supporting and implementing the specialised surveys under MED-HIMS. In Europe, UNECE and Eurostat regularly organize work sessions on migration statistics to foster advances in this domain and facilitate exchanges of best practices. UNECE has been holding annual capacity-building workshops for countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, to support the use of methodological guidance and facilitate communication between countries, as well as between producers and users of migration statistics. Since 2015, ILO has been organising regular migration workshops on labour migration statistics for 22 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, in collaboration with Statistics Korea. ILO will also assist countries in implementing the *Guidelines Concerning Statistics on International Labour Migration*<sup>18</sup>, endorsed by the 20<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Labour Statisticians in October 2018. IOM’s Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) supports governments in their efforts to improve migration data collection, analysis, sharing and use for policymaking at the national and regional levels, in collaboration with partners including UNDESA, ILO, OECD and the African Union. GMDAC also prepared the “Guidelines for the Harmonization of Migration Data Management in the ECOWAS Region,” which were used to facilitate a regional training of trainers as well as national-level trainings in ECOWAS Member States in 2017.

31. Furthermore, UNHCR will be working with partners to assist countries in the implementation of the International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics<sup>19</sup>, adopted in 2018 by the Statistical Commission (Decision 49/115). Statistics Sweden, in collaboration with the African Union, will start implementing a project to strengthen national capacity in sub-Saharan Africa over the period 2019-2021. The project will take a regional approach to: develop regionally-adapted guidelines; establish national and regional networks; and to improve the identification and flows of migration data from countries. Within its support to the 2020 census round, UNFPA, in collaboration with the Statistics Division and IOM will provide support to ensure timely processing, analysis and dissemination of migration related census results, disaggregated and tabulated in accordance with international standards.

32. Under the guidance of the Expert Group on Migration Statistics, the Statistics Division is currently developing a migration statistics portal to facilitate storing and sharing of methodologies, data and metadata as well as technical and other materials for capacity building activities on migration data. Currently the portal disseminates

<sup>17</sup> United Nations Recommendations for Statistics of International Migration, rev. 1 ([https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/seriesm/seriesm\\_58rev1e.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/seriesm/seriesm_58rev1e.pdf)); Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, rev. 3 ([https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/cgm/NewYork/2014/P&R\\_Revision3.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/cgm/NewYork/2014/P&R_Revision3.pdf)); United Nations Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses (<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/48th-session/documents/BG-4a-Migration-Handbook-E.pdf>)

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/meetings-and-events/international-conference-of-labour-statisticians/WCMS\\_648922/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/meetings-and-events/international-conference-of-labour-statisticians/WCMS_648922/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>19</sup> [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Principles\\_and\\_Recommendations/International-Migration/2018\\_1746\\_EN\\_08-E.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Principles_and_Recommendations/International-Migration/2018_1746_EN_08-E.pdf)

information on how national censuses collect information on international migration, based on a review of all national censuses carried out in the 2010 and 2020 rounds.<sup>20</sup>

## **VI. International Forum on Migration Statistics**

33. The Statistics Division organized, in collaboration with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, IOM and the United Nations Population Division, the first forum on international migration statistics<sup>21</sup>, in Paris on 15 and 16 January 2018. Mobilizing expertise from a wide range of disciplines, such as political science, economics, demography, development, geospatial science, sociology, statistics and information technology, the forum organized 5 plenary sessions with high-level speakers and 39 parallel sessions with over 200 presentations.

34. Discussion at the Forum pointed to the importance of disaggregated migration data to monitor progress towards sustainable development and identified significant migration data gaps. The Forum further acknowledged the leading role of national statistical offices in improving evidence and increasing data on migration, including by taking advantage of big data and other innovative approaches, while stressing the need for strengthening national statistical capacity as well as cooperation among international agencies. Finally, the Forum also emphasized that effective communication of data is necessary for overcoming public misperceptions of migration and migrants.

35. The first International Forum on Migration Statistics succeeded in bringing together policy makers, official statisticians, experts from private sector, civil societies and funding agencies to share and discuss data needs for policymaking, issues in measuring migration and innovative methods and to foster collaboration among all partners. The Forum was also instrumental in identifying areas where additional efforts are needed, including in terms of methodological developments and sharing good practices and for capacity building. The next International Forum on Migration Statistics will be held either in 2019 or 2020.

## **VII. Work programme of the Statistics Division and the Expert Group**

36. It is proposed that the Statistics Division and the Expert Group on Migration Statistics carry out the following activities in 2019-20:

- a. Finalise the Technical Report on Measuring Migration-relevant SDG Indicators;
- b. Finalise the guidance note on a set of standard questions on international migration for population censuses and surveys, after adaptation and testing in national censuses and surveys, and distribute it widely;
- c. Continue the work on other methodological developments, including the revision of the United Nations Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration;
- d. Continue to develop technical materials and identify good practices related to migration statistics;
- e. Organise the second International Forum on Migration Statistics;
- f. Develop a global programme to strengthen national capacity on migration statistics, based on the national migration data infrastructure outlined above, taking into consideration existing regional and subregional mechanisms, and providing estimates of resources needed for the implementation of all its components.

## **VIII. Points for discussion and decision**

37. The Statistical Commission is invited to:

- a. Take note of the contribution of the Bureau of the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division to the negotiations of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration;
- b. Take note of the work carried out by the Statistics Division and the Expert Group on Migration Statistics on the improvement of migration statistics;
- c. Express its views and adopt the Terms of Reference for the Expert Group on Migration Statistics;
- d. Express its views and adopt the national migration data infrastructure - a comprehensive framework for capacity development on international migration statistics;
- e. Express its views and adopt the work programme of the Statistics Division and the Expert Group on Migration Statistics, as contained in paragraph 36.

<sup>20</sup> Available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/sconcerns/migration/index.cshtml>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/migration/forum-migration-statistics/>





## Annex 1. United Nations Expert Group on Migration Statistics Terms of Reference (December 2018)

### A. Background

1. The Expert Group on Migration Statistics is a group of subject-matter experts from national statistical offices, international, regional and sub-regional organisations, migration-relevant line ministries of countries, and other experts in the area. The Group first met in New York in June 2017 and discussed data needs and methodological issues related to statistics on international migration, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>22</sup>

2. The work of the Expert Group was welcomed by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its 49<sup>th</sup> Session in March 2018.<sup>23</sup> The Commission further recommended that the Expert Group continues its work on improving statistics on international migration, through advancing methodologies to measure the phenomenon, including by revising the 1998 *United Nations Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration*<sup>24</sup>. The Commission also requested the Expert Group to undertake additional activities including (a) assessing data gaps and national needs for capacity development and (b) ensuring proper coordination among international initiatives and programmes that support national statistical systems to produce and disseminate high-quality and fit-for-purpose statistics on international migration.

### B. Objectives and Tasks

3. The overall objective of the Expert Group is to improve statistics on international migration for effective policymaking, through: (a) advancing methodologies on collecting, compiling and using statistics relevant to migration; (b) implementing activities that address data gaps and national needs for capacity development; and (c) enhancing coordination of international and regional initiatives with countries and within countries.

4. The work of the Expert Group should respond to and be aligned with relevant international development and protection frameworks, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees.

5. More specifically, the Expert Group will:

a. Advance methodologies to measure the migration phenomenon for data-driven policymaking and for monitoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through the revision of the *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration*.

b. Develop a global programme, providing estimates of resources needed, to strengthen national capacity on migration statistics that includes: developing technical materials such as the needs assessment tools; providing guidance and technical support to countries in identifying and addressing data gaps and national needs; and make recommendations to be considered by the Statistical Commission.

c. Facilitate coordination among regional and international agencies on the development of methods, as well as capacity building activities, to avoid duplication of efforts, optimize use of resources and ensure activities are consistent and aligned with national needs. The Expert Group will also collaborate with other relevant UN mechanisms such as the International Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics, the UN Migration Network and other regional migration statistics groups on issues related to statistics on international migration.

<sup>22</sup> The main focus of the meeting was to discuss and agree on the definition of migratory status and to identify a list of relevant SDG indicators to be disaggregated by migratory status for global monitoring. Documents of the 2017 Expert Group Meeting are available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/meetings/2017/new-york--egm-migration-data>.

<sup>23</sup> E/2018/24-E/CN.3/2018/37, Decision 49/101

<sup>24</sup> [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/seriesm/seriesm\\_58rev1e.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/seriesm/seriesm_58rev1e.pdf)

Field Code Changed

### C. Membership

6. Members should be senior representatives from relevant statistical offices, regional agencies and academic institutions; countries represented by both national statistical offices and relevant line ministries. Initial agencies, countries and other members were selected on the basis of their organization's mandate and commitment to the advancement of statistics on international migration. Additional member countries were added following recommendations from UN regional commissions to also include major migrant-sending countries.

7. Members will be part of the Expert Group for an initial period of two years, after which a rotation will be proposed by the co-chairs of the Expert Group, with a view to ensuring equitable regional representation, including members of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. The rotation will be implemented in a way that ensures institutional knowledge is preserved and the Expert Group's work can smoothly continue. Members are expected to be active in the deliberations/activities of the Expert Group.

8. The Expert Group may invite other agencies, countries or individuals as resource persons or observers, if needed. Membership may be increased or decreased as the exigencies of the work require and based on available resources.

**Secretariat:** The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) serves as the Secretariat of the Expert Group. UNSD, in close consultation with the co-chairs, proposes the work programme for the Expert Group, coordinates the overall work of the Expert Group, organizes regular meetings, prepares and maintains records of discussions and agreements and reports to the UN Statistical Commission. Furthermore, UNSD will lead and contribute to various areas of work on methodological development and capacity building.

9. **Co-chairs:** Rotate on a 2-year period. One is selected from international entities and one from representatives from national statistical offices. The Expert Group (by majority) will elect the co-chairs among volunteers expressing an interest in the positions. The two co-chairpersons will work closely with UNSD on strategic planning on the work programme of the Expert Group and oversees the work of the task forces. They will also report to the Expert Group on work progress, problems identified, solutions recommended and decisions to be made.

### D. Organization of work

10. The Expert Group will meet physically at least once a year, supplemented with additional virtual meetings as necessary. Participation in the physical meetings is self-funded. A limited number of developing countries that are members of the Expert Group may receive funding, when available, to support their participation in the meetings.

11. The Expert Group will establish task forces on specific topics, when needed. Task forces will have clear terms of reference, with clear time frame for completion and will report back to the Expert Group.

### E. Expected duration

12. The work of the Expert Group will be on-going. The ToR will be reviewed when needed and as requested by the UN Statistical Commission.

**Current members of the Expert Group on Migration Statistics (as of December 2018)**

Countries (20)

Canada  
Ecuador  
Egypt  
Georgia  
Ghana  
Indonesia  
Italy  
Jamaica  
Jordan  
Mexico  
Morocco  
Norway  
Republic of Moldova  
Russian Federation  
South Africa  
Sri Lanka  
Switzerland  
Thailand  
Uganda  
USA

UNESCO Institute for Statistics  
UN-FFDO  
UNFPA  
UN Global Pulse  
UNHCR  
UNICEF  
UNODC  
UNPD

Regional commissions (5)

UNECA  
UNECE  
UNECLAC  
UNESCAP  
UNESCWA

Independent experts (4)

Mr. Giambattista Cantisani, Expert  
Ms. Olga Chudinovskikh, Moscow State University  
Ms. Keiko Osaki-Tomita, Tokyo University of Foreign  
Studies  
Ms. Ann Singleton, Bristol University

Organisations (13)

ECOWAS  
Eurostat  
ILO  
IOM  
OECD

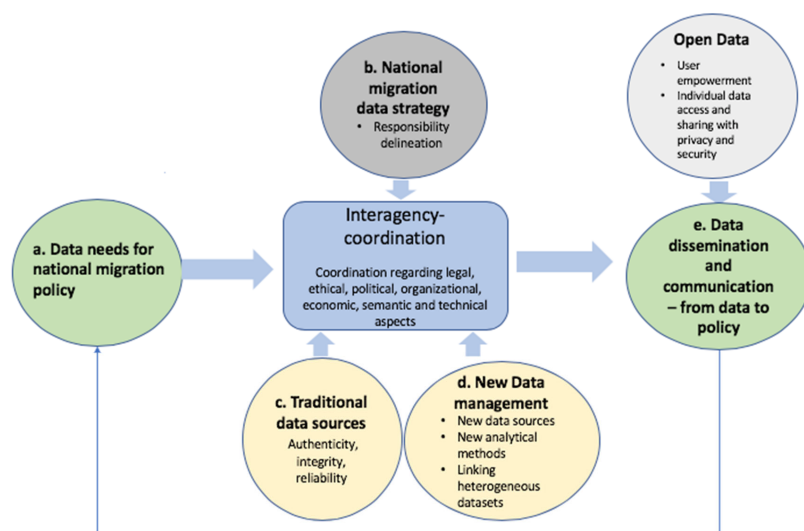
Secretariat

UN Statistics Division

## Annex 2. National migration data infrastructure – a framework for capacity development

This section describes key components of a national migration data infrastructure that will be used as a framework for capacity development. A national migration data infrastructure is a platform that brings together key stakeholders in the country including main users of migration data such as policy makers, private sector, academia, and civil society and data producers from the national statistical offices and the statistical units of other relevant ministries (figure 1).

Figure 1. A comprehensive national migration data infrastructure



According to the country-specific situation, a national migration data infrastructure should be led by an interagency coordination body that will coordinate efforts among all elements within the infrastructure.<sup>25</sup> It starts with an assessment of data needs for national migration policy and completes with proper dissemination and uses of data for policy purposes. Guided by national migration data policy and the open data principle, the data infrastructure should have an agreed architecture for inter-related databases for migration data that can be used by policy makers. These databases are robust, consistent, of high-quality and inter-operable. This network of databases will form the core of data support to drive public policy making on migration.

<sup>25</sup> Activities to be covered by the interagency coordination body may include (a) assess gaps in migration data for effective policymaking; (b) facilitate integration of migration into other areas; (c) enhance data flows within the national statistical system including establishing the necessary legal framework for data sharing; (d) improve synergy on concepts, definitions and data collection and dissemination methods; and (e) coordinate methodological development on producing timely, reliable and policy-relevant statistics on international migration.

Key databases within the migration data infrastructure consists of two main types, classified by their sources: (a) traditional data sources including censuses, surveys and administrative sources; (b) non-traditional data sources such as geospatial information including satellite images and other types of unstructured data generated from business transactions, mobile phone tracking and social media.

a. Data needs for national migration policy

Demands for official statistics by policy makers to support their work have been on the rise. For example, countries with big influx of immigrants would be interested in the number and characteristics of immigrants, as well as the smaller geographic unit where they reside to answer the following policy questions. Are migrants integrated well into the society? How do migrants contribute to the national and local economy? Are the public services prepared to accommodate the needs of immigrants? For countries with large emigration, a big policy interest is to understand better their citizens living abroad, including the total number, their characteristics and which country they moved to. Data needed to answer those policy questions should be clearly stated.

b. National migration data strategy

Establishing a national migration data strategy is an important step to build a migration data infrastructure. The strategy needs to elaborate or stipulate on responsibilities of different government institutions and private sectors in collecting and producing migration statistics. Data integration should be a core element of the national migration data strategy and sharing of data among producers should be encouraged, and even better, required by statistical legislation.

c. Traditional data sources

Traditional data sources for international migration include population censuses, sample surveys and administrative sources. There is a need to ensure that timely and high-quality migration statistics are collected, processed and disseminated, from all traditional data sources.

For example, key migration questions such as country of birth and country of citizenship should be asked in censuses and surveys and information collected should be disseminated timely and with great quality. For in-depth analysis of the impact of migration on a society, surveys need to be planned carefully so that they ask not only the right questions but also adopt appropriate sampling strategy.

Administrative data are extremely important for migration measurement: border controls either collect embarkation and disembarkation cards or have information from passport and visa scanning; ministry of labour has data on work permits granted to foreigners, ministry of education has information on foreign students attending school in the country, and population registers or register of foreigners maintain databases of people residing in the country. None of such information can be readily obtained through censuses or surveys. To make migration data relevant and timely, the use of administrative data should be encouraged. This means, more information should be captured, compiled and shared within the migration data infrastructure.

d. New Data Management

Information on migration is usually captured through multiple data sources and for a comprehensive picture, integrating information from different data sources, including censuses, surveys and administrative data, within the country and between countries, is needed.

Mobile phones, internet-based tools and platforms such as social media or online payment services, and digital sensors and meters such as satellite imagery represent potential innovative or “new data” sources of migration data. Existing migration studies based on those new data sources attest a certain potential. Bringing together private data producers, analysts, data scientists and technologist for more research and experiments in this area would be essential. Furthermore, connecting the latest research and technology with the community of official statistics is crucial to fully integrate new data into the migration data infrastructure.

Innovative approaches on the integration of multiple data sources should be promoted and the use of new data should be explored to enhance the availability and timeliness of migration statistics, while ensuring that privacy, ethical and human rights issues are adequately addressed and taking the quality of data into consideration.

e. Data dissemination and communication – from data to policies

An important post-data production step, which is often overlooked, is to ensure that data are disseminated and well communicated with policy makers and the general public, and are used properly. Statistical offices need to communicate effectively to help policy makers, the media and the general public identify, understand, and make full use of trusted sources of data and statistics, in order to support the planning, implementation and monitoring of development efforts at all levels of decision making.

This element is particularly important to promote fact-based public discourse to shape perception of migration, as stated in objective 17 of the current draft of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

Data dissemination in the country should be guided by the principle of open data. That is, data disseminated should be of high quality, well documented, respecting data privacy concerns, free, easily accessible and usable.<sup>26</sup> The open data principle embraced by national statistical offices and other government agencies will enable users to take advantage of the data that are complete, timely and adhere to standards.

Open data are crucial yet challenging for migration statistics. Many countries would need guidance on implementing the principles of open data, along various aspects such as establishing communications and outreach programmes to engage all stakeholders; revising laws or legal frameworks to allow for necessary provisions to ensure that data are open and accessible fully respecting data privacy concerns; and developing data interoperability principles and tools, as data interoperability is an important tool to ensure that open data are usable.<sup>27</sup>

National statistical offices play an important role in introducing the principles of open data. Their experience and technical skills in setting standards on data collection and dissemination are key in issuing guidelines on metadata and data anonymization and data privacy in open data.

<sup>26</sup> Defined in the context of the international seminar on open data for the Sustainable Development Goals, Seoul, 25-27 September 2017)

<sup>27</sup> Report of the Secretariat General on Open data, E/CN.3/2018/6 <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/49th-session/documents/2018-6-OpenData-E.pdf>