

United Nations Statistical Commission
Fifty-second session
1–3 and 5 March 2021
Item 3 (g) of the provisional agenda
Items for discussion and decision: migration statistics

Document E/CN.3/2021/11 – Report of the Secretary-General on migration statistics

Statement provided by:

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Statement:

Norway takes note of the work by done to improve migration statistics and welcome the updating of a conceptual framework for migration statistics and support the concept of splitting the population into two distinct groups, the resident population and the temporary population, and the definition of net migration as a change in the resident population (para. 24).

In the following we do however have some comments and concerns to be noted by the Commission.

Implications of national definitions and practices

We emphasize that many NSOs are not able, or only with significant additional resources, to produce migration statistics that are fully consistent with international standards and recommendations due to the strong position of national definitions and practices, including the role of population and other administrative registers.

An example of these inconsistencies includes the duration of (intended) stay in the residence country, which the UN recommends being one year, whereas several countries use three or six months. Another example is asylum seekers, which should be considered part of the resident population according to the Framework, as well as the International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics, however from our NSO point of view it is not feasible to include this group as they are not considered residents by the National Population Register.

Resident stock by citizenship

Regarding resident stock by citizenship, we are concerned by the conceptual framework underpinning the section that reconciles foreign-born and native-born, and foreign citizens and national citizens. Chapter D seems to mix legal and demographic concepts.

We would also raise concerns about the treatment of stateless in the Framework. While every person may have a country of birth, not every person has a citizenship. Chapter D seems to exclude from resident population stocks those who are either stateless or of undetermined nationality. A change of the language should be considered – from Citizens and Foreign citizens to Citizens and Non-citizens. If the terms Foreigner or Foreign citizen are used, it should be added that they include stateless persons. The current wording appears to exclude stateless people from the resident stock, even if that is not the intention.

Definitions of immigration

In Annex 1, the definition of the immigrant population stock seems to include all stateless people as immigrants. However, in some countries, a minority of stateless people will have migrated

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internationally, and relatively few will meet the paper's definition of migration as a change in the resident population. In other countries, most stateless people will be international migrants. It is of concern that all stateless people would be defined as immigrants, despite most having lived in their current residence countries for many generations. This definition will concretize many discriminatory misconceptions that particular stateless ethnic groups of people belong to another State. Thus, the inclusion of stateless and citizenship in the definition of migration is unnecessary and confusing.

The definition of the immigrant stock should include just those born in another country. The proposed alternative wording might be: *Immigrant population (stock) refers to all persons who reside in the country of measurement at a given time and were born in another country.*

In relation to this agenda item, Norway would also draw the attention to the proposal by Kenya at the 51st session of the Statistical Commission about including statelessness statistics at the 52nd session of the statistical Commission, supported by Norway and others, and reiterated in our statement to agenda item 6 at the current session.

Submitted on:

2/19/2021