



## UN Statistical Commission Side Event 2021

### Leaving no one behind: Improving Statistics on Statelessness

Co-organized by  
Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS), UNHCR and UNFPA  
25 of February | 11:00 AM (NEW YORK TIME) | Virtual Event

#### Background

Recognizing the growing momentum with the [Global Action Plan to End Statelessness 2014-2024](#), and the ongoing development of the **International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS)**<sup>1</sup>, the [Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics \(EGRIS\)](#) jointly with UNHCR and UNFPA are organizing a side event at the margins of the UN Statistical Commission to foster discussions on statelessness statistics. The event will aim at bringing together a diverse range of experts from the local and global levels, including governments and statistical offices, humanitarian and development actors from the UN, World Bank, and civil society to promote information exchange and encourage peer-to-peer learning in the area.

Overall, the event will aim to inform the statistical community about the current scarcity and weaknesses of official statistics needed to estimate the size and characteristics of stateless populations globally<sup>2</sup>. It will highlight the importance of developing statistical standards and the harmonization of statistics which describe the growing problem of statelessness. Particular emphasis will be put on the ongoing process to develop new International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS) under the auspices of EGRIS while aiming to foster feedback and support on this. The event will be an opportunity to galvanize technical and political support for IROSS, with the objective of submission of the recommendations to the UN Statistical Commission in March 2022.

The proposal of the event comes at a time when the world is assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the production of demographic and other statistics, especially the impact on the functioning of national civil registration systems. As revealed by the survey on the impact of the pandemic on civil registration and

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<sup>1</sup> As part of the EGRIS umbrella, an expert group on statelessness statistics is currently working on the development of common standards and definitions to improve the quality and relevance of statistics on stateless populations. In December 2019, the expert group gathered in Bangkok to discuss the development of International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS). Representatives from 16 countries, including experts from national statistical offices and line ministries, as well as UNHCR, UNFPA and UN regional commissions participated in this meeting. The group developed an ambitious work plan to deliver the recommendations on statelessness statistics within two years. The ultimate objective is to submit the international recommendations to the United Nations Statistical Commission for its adoption in March 2022.

<sup>2</sup> In 2014 the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) launched the [#IBelong](#) Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024. At that time a target was set to increase the number of States with quantitative estimates of the size of their stateless populations from 75 to 100 by the year 2017, but UNHCR is currently only able to report statelessness data for 79 countries and estimated data for a further 22.

vital statistics<sup>3</sup> launched by UNSD in May 2020, in developing countries the registration of births and deaths decreased in 2020 compared to previous years. This is largely due to the suspension of civil registration services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The reduction in birth registration increases the risks of statelessness for babies who were not able to be registered at birth.

Guaranteeing individuals' rights to an identity and citizenship is a crucial element for the achievement of the sustainable development goals, especially of SDG 16.9 and the overall ambition of leaving no one behind<sup>4</sup>. Without citizenship, stateless people often risk being left out of policy and programme development as well as national responses, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Statelessness statistics, in that sense, are critical to understand this phenomenon and inform concrete actions in the area.

## Objectives

The objectives of the event include:

- Informing the statistical community about the current scarcity and weaknesses of official statistics needed to estimate the size and characteristics of stateless populations globally;
- Highlighting the importance of developing statistical standards and the harmonization of statistics which describe the growing problem of statelessness;
- Raising awareness of the ongoing process to develop new International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS) under the auspices of EGRIS and inviting feedback and support on this;
- Galvanizing technical and political support for IROSS, with the aim of submission of IROSS to the UN Statistical Commission in March 2022;
- Fostering information exchange and encouraging peer-to-peer learning across statistical sectors, international initiatives, and national contexts (Civil registration, WB/ID4D, statelessness statistics);

## Expected outcomes

It is expected that the event will lead to:

- Increased recognition of the importance of improving statelessness statistics in order to leave no one behind;
- Improved understanding of how stateless populations can be included and identified in official statistics to improve the quality and quantity of data available for the development of policies to eliminate statelessness;
- Increased awareness of and support for the work of developing the IROSS;
- Enhanced engagement among national statistical offices and international and regional organizations in the development of the IROSS.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/legal-identity-agenda/covid-19>

<sup>4</sup> UNHCR. [The Sustainable Development Goals and Addressing Statelessness.](#)

## Target audience

The conference aims to attract technical practitioners and decision-makers from both data providers and data users of national and global levels.

## Practical information

- The event will take place virtually on **the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2021 at 11:00 AM (NEW YORK TIME)**.
- It will be available on the **Webex Meeting Platform**. The event will be recorded and made available to participants after the meeting. Participants will be able to engage in the discussions through the video or chat functions.
- Duration of the event: 90 min

## Panelists

Ms. Melanie Khanna, Senior Legal Coordinator and Section Chief, Statelessness at UNHCR (Speaker)

Mr. Rusanganwa Damascene, Director of Citizen Services at Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration, Rwanda (Speaker)

Mr. Jonathan Marskell, Senior Program Officer with the Identification for Development (ID4D) program at the World Bank (Speaker)

Mr. Tom Moultrie, Professor of Demography, Centre For Actuarial Research (CARE) at the University of Cape Town (Speaker)

Mr. Romesh Silva, Senior Technical Specialist at UNFPA (Speaker)

Ms. Natalia Krynsky Baal, Senior Strategy & Policy Officer at the World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Center (Speaker)

Ms. Aina Helen Saetre, Senior Statistics Coordination Officer at UNHCR (Moderator)

## Agenda

Time	Description
10:45 – 11:00 am	Access to the event platform
11:00 – 12:00 am	Presentations
12:00 – 12:30 pm	Q&A

## Focal points

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## **Progress Paper**

*[Progress paper on International recommendations on Statelessness Statistics \(IROSS\)](#)*

**[Register here](#)**