

Thank you Chair,

The Commission has before it document E/CN.3/2015/9 about Refugee statistics.

Refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons represent a severe problem for those individuals and societies that are involved. It is obvious that it is important that these phenomena's are described by quality statistics. This is however the first time this important topic is brought explicitly to the Commission's attention.

The number of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons has increased dramatically over the recent years. According to the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) , the number of forcibly displaced persons stood at more than 50 million in 2013, the highest in the post-Second World War era, and the numbers have continued to increase in 2014 and 2015.

At the same time there is a growing concern about the quality and availability of the statistical information on refugees and forcibly displaced persons.

International statistics on refugees etc lacks clear definitions, classifications and methods . This is in particular the case for persons displaced within their own country. The links and cooperation between national statistical offices and international organizations that collect and disseminate statistics is unclear. Refugees and asylum seekers will to some extent be covered by existing recommendations on censuses and international migration statistics but this is clearly not sufficient for quality and timely statistics on refugees and asylum seekers. It is easy to observe that for many countries there is no connection between the national statistics on refugees and the official population and migration statistics of the national statistical office.

It is therefore long overdue that the statistical commission discusses this area of statistics and it was on this background that Statistics Norway last year proposed this important topic for this year's Commission.

The report under this agenda item has been written by UNHCR and Statistics Norway. The report describes how national and international statistics on refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons are produced today, some of the challenges with the current system as well as a set of proposed solutions for how to improve statistics in this area.

The report also indicates how the national statistical offices more actively can contribute to such a process.

Since there is at the present no forum or conference that systematically discusses and addresses these topics and no international recommendations on refugee statistics the report presents some proposals to improve this situation.

The goal will be to develop international guidelines as recommendations or a statistical handbook that can be applied to better cover the refugee population through statistical instruments such as the population censuses, surveys and administrative systems.

Therefore, for the way forward, we invite the Statistical Commission to discuss the following:

- We suggest to start the work with this handbook by organising an international conference or ad hoc meeting on refugee statistics. While statistics on internally displaced persons also need to be looked at, we suggest to focus on refugees first. Such a conference would be the first of its kind and bring together experts from international organisations and national statistical offices. The conference should explore how to best incorporate statistics on refugees within the national statistical systems and how these in turn can contribute to better international statistics on refugees.
- The conclusions and recommendations on the way forward will be brought to the UNSC 2016
- If the UNSC 2016 approves the way forward, a project with the aim to produce this handbook has to be organised

Thank you