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MIGRATION POLICY PRACTICE

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Introduction: Improving data on migration – towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Compact on Migration

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In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the 2030 Agenda, international migration is recognized as an integral part of sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), unlike the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), include important references to migration. The SDGs incorporate targets to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration, to maximize the contribution of migrants and migration to inclusive and sustainable development, and to address migration-related challenges.

The inclusion of migration in the new global development framework will pose several new challenges for national statistical systems around the world which are already struggling to collect and analyse data on migration. The SDGs will require making better use of existing data sources, as well as developing new methods to collect data on migration. An additional problem is that many of the concepts linked to migration have not been well defined for measurement purposes – for example, targets relating to safe, orderly and regular migration. Furthermore, the SDG Agenda calls upon States to ensure that "nobody is left behind"; this will require States to disaggregate data by migratory status to address the vulnerability of migrants.

On 19 September 2016, UN Member States adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, in which they agreed to improve national collection and international cooperation on migration data, disaggregated by sex and age, pertaining to regular and irregular flows, the economic impacts of migration and refugee movements, human trafficking, and the needs of refugees, migrants and host communities.

The New York Declaration also set in motion a process of intergovernmental negotiations leading to the planned adoption of the Global Compact on Migration in 2018. The Global Compact on Migration is expected to set out a range of principles, commitments and understandings among Member States regarding migration in all its dimensions, including the humanitarian, developmental, human rights-related and other aspects of migration, and to make an important contribution to global governance and enhance coordination on international migration.

These important developments in 2015 and 2016 are likely to provide fresh impetus to discussions concerning how to improve data on international migration. While this is a subject that has been discussed over many years, there has been relatively little agreement on a way forward and a set of priority actions which could help reduce data gaps and promote a better use of existing data sources. In order to facilitate discussion of such issues and to exchange best data practices, the International Organization for Migration organized a conference on improving international migration data in December 2016. The articles in this volume were first presented at this conference, which was held at Germany's Federal Foreign Office in Berlin and sponsored by the European Commission and the Government of the United States (for more information, see http://gmdac.iom.int/conference-resources).

The editors would also like to encourage readers to spare a couple of minutes to participate in a survey, which aims to help us identify our readers' profiles, the institutions they represent and their primary interests in our journal. Should you wish to participate in this survey, please **click here**.■

Measuring worker-paid migration costs

Philip Martin[1]

Every year up to 10 million workers leave one country to work in another. International migrants remit over USD 450 billion a year to their home countries, and that the average cost of sending remittances is 8 per cent of the amount transferred. We know far less about what migrants pay to get jobs abroad.

Migrants' remittances contribute to development in their home countries. Recognizing this positive contribution, the international community has incorporated migration into global development policy. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for instance, make reference to migration in Target 10.7, which is to "facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies". Indicator 10.7.1 of the SDGs measures recruitment costs borne by employees as a proportion of the yearly income earned in the country of destination, in an effort to determine how much migrant workers have to pay to get the jobs overseas and therefore reduce the costs so that these workers and their families can benefit more from the income earned abroad.

There is no migration cost database comparable to the World Bank's remittance cost database that has data on what workers pay for foreign jobs. Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) sponsored surveys in various migration corridors that asked migrant workers what they paid to get the jobs they held or from which they were returning, that is, some workers were interviewed while they were employed abroad and others after they returned.

Migration costs in destinations

The first surveys interviewed legal and low-skilled migrant workers employed in Kuwait, the Republic of Korea and Spain in 2014. In the Republic of Korea, migrant workers reported paying an average USD 1,525, or 1 to 1.5 months of typical earnings, to get their jobs. Most had 36-month contracts, so they could expect to earn USD 36,000 at USD 1,000 a month or USD 54,000 at USD 1,500 a month, depending on how much overtime they worked. Migrant worker contracts can be extended for an additional 22 months at the request of migrants and their Korean employers, so average migration costs of USD 1,525 could be less than 3 per cent of expected earnings in the Republic of Korea if migrants would stay in the country for the maximum of almost five years.

Worker-paid migration costs in Kuwait averaged USD 1,900, and average monthly earnings were USD 465, so migration costs were equivalent to four months of earnings in Kuwait. With two-year contracts, migrant workers would earn USD 11,160 and worker-paid migration costs would be a sixth of earnings. For Egyptians, many of whom were employed in their home country at an average wage of USD 165 a month, earning over USD 600 a month in Kuwait was four times more than they would have earned in Egypt.

Worker-paid costs to fill seasonal farm jobs in Spain averaged USD 530 or half a month's average earnings of USD 1,000 in Spain. Most seasonal farm workers were employed in Spain from four to nine months, making worker-paid migration costs 6 to 12 per cent of earnings in the country. Migration costs were relatively low despite only seasonal earnings because all of the workers interviewed had previous work experience in Spain, and Spanish regulations require employers to pay half of the transportation costs of the migrant workers they employ. When workers arrived in Spain from afar, such as from Ecuador, employers usually paid the full cost of inbound transportation and deducted transport costs from worker earnings at the rate of EUR 90 (USD 100) a month.

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Migration costs for returning workers

Ethiopian workers returning from Saudi Arabia reported paying an average USD 1,000 in total migration costs, with a range of USD 55 to USD 6,135 (using the 2014 exchange rates). The major worker-paid cost was for recruitment agents. Almost 90 per cent of Ethiopians reported payments to agents, a median USD 440 and a range from USD 25 to USD 3,780. Agent costs were over half of the total migration costs reported by workers.

Some 340 Filipino migrants returning from Qatar were interviewed in the Philippines in the first half of 2015. About 55 per cent were men, their average age was 39, and two thirds were married, making them older than migrants returning from the Gulf to South Asia. Almost 40 per cent of returning Filipinos completed secondary school, a sixth had some postsecondary education and a quarter were college graduates.

Over 60 per cent of Filipinos reported finding their jobs in Qatar via friends and relatives, followed by 30 per cent who learned of their jobs via manpower agencies. Returning Filipinos were in Qatar for a median 24 months. Total migration costs were USD 177,600, an average USD 520, with a range from USD 4 to USD 3,300. Almost half of these total costs were for manpower agencies.

There were three major differences between Ethiopians returning from Saudi Arabia and Filipinos returning from Qatar. First, the Filipinos were older, better educated and had lower migration costs than the Ethiopians, paying about half as much and almost always having employers pay for their international travel. Second, the Filipinos had higher earnings abroad, a median USD 435 a month versus USD 265 for the Ethiopians. Two thirds of the Filipinos, versus one third of the Ethiopians, were employed before departure. Third, the Filipinos worked fewer hours a week than the Ethiopians, a median 56 versus 90 hours, in part because a higher share of Ethiopians were domestic workers.

The 400 Indian migrants interviewed as they returned from Qatar in the first half of 2015 had a median age of 31. Almost 60 per cent completed 10 years of schooling, 30 per cent completed primary (six years) but not secondary school, and 12 per cent had post-secondary schooling, such as technical training. They reported total expenses for jobs in Qatar of USD 456,000 (using the 2014 exchange rates), an average of USD 1,140 and a range of USD 350 to USD 1,690. The main components of migration costs were agent costs, an average USD 550; international travel, an average USD 295; and other costs, an average USD 97.

The 350 Nepalese migrants who were interviewed as they returned from Qatar had a median age of 30. Most had little education: 22 per cent reported no schooling, 35 per cent reported incomplete primary schooling, 16 per cent indicated complete primary schooling, 18 per cent reported some secondary schooling, and 7 per cent confirmed complete secondary schooling, that is, two thirds had primary schooling or less. The Nepalese migrants reported total expenses for jobs in Qatar paid USD 369,000 using the 2014 exchange rates, an average USD 1,055 and a range of USD 70 to USD 2,835. The main components were agent costs, an average USD 875; inland travel, an average USD 110; and passports, an average USD 75.

Indians and Nepalese paid about the same amount to get construction jobs in Qatar, but Indians earned almost twice as much as Nepalese, helping to explain why the Indians remitted almost twice as much as the Nepalese. The Nepalese had low levels of education and were mostly helpers and labourers in Qatar, earning a median USD 325 a month in Qatar versus USD 600 a month for Indians. Unlike the Indians, most Nepalese were not employed before leaving Nepal or, if employed in Nepal, were not employed in construction. However, like the Indians, all of the Nepalese entered Qatar with visas and were legal when they returned home.

This migration cost data highlights three major facts. First, the most important determinant of what legal and low-skilled workers pay to obtain foreign jobs is corridor, meaning that the Nepalese pay more than the Indians for construction jobs in Qatar. There is variance in what individual Indians and Nepalese pay for jobs in Qatar, but the major difference is that between India–Qatar and Nepal–Qatar, suggesting that policies to reduce worker-paid migration costs are likely to be corridor specific.

Second, average costs in most corridors were raised by superpayers who had very high costs. There was little difference in average migration costs by age, education and experience, but the 10 per cent of workers who had the highest migration costs often accounted for 20 to 30 per cent of total costs in a corridor. Just as superusers of health care account for a disproportionate share of total health-care

spending, so superpayers in migration account for a disproportionate share of total migration costs, suggesting the need to target superpayers in order to reduce migration costs.

Third, migration costs were generally less than 10 per cent of foreign earnings. Reports of workers who pay very high migration costs and who are enslaved or in debt bondage abroad may leave the impression that most workers incur very high migration costs. However, most workers reported paying the equivalent of two or three months of foreign earnings to get their jobs, and were able to repay the loans they usually took from family and friends relatively quickly with their foreign earnings.

There are workers who are trafficked and enslaved, and one such worker is one too many. However, just as it is hard to examine the health of a population only by interviewing persons in hospital emergency rooms, so it is hard to examine the health of a migration corridor only by interviewing migrants with complaints. Migrant complaint centres can reveal misery and deception as well as strategic thinking, as when workers file complaints near the end of their contracts to obtain one- to six-month "free visas" to work for any employer while their complaints are resolved.

Moving forward on migration costs

There are four major types of worker-paid costs. The first involves general and specific training costs, including learning another language, to prepare for jobs overseas. Second are the financial costs of obtaining contracts for jobs abroad, complete exit procedures and travel to the foreign job. Third are the opportunity costs of wages not earned while training and preparing to go abroad. Fourth are the social costs associated with separation from family and friends, and restrictions on rights while employed abroad.

Most surveys of workers focus on the second type of costs – the financial costs to learn about the job, obtain a contract to fill the job, complete pre-departure procedures and obtain passports and visas as well as health and police clearances, and travel internally and overseas. Most surveys ignore the cost of basic K–12 education and advanced schooling that could lead to a job at home or abroad. However, some types of training are aimed specifically at jobs abroad, such as seafarer or cruise ship worker training. Should the costs of training-that-will-pay-off-only-abroad be included?

What about the cost of past failed efforts to find overseas jobs? On the one hand, past efforts that did not result in a foreign job could logically be included in the cost of the current successful effort to get a contract. However, if past failed efforts to go to one country are attributed to the current job in another country, migration costs in a particular corridor could be raised artificially. From a worker's perspective, failed investments to get jobs abroad are relevant to the payoff from migration in the current job, but in a bilateral migration cost matrix, including the costs of failed efforts to move in other corridors, would bias cost estimates for specific corridors.

Most worker surveys ignore opportunity and social costs because they are hard to measure accurately and are likely to vary widely from worker to worker. It is also hard to determine exactly how policy changes could affect opportunity and social costs. Similarly, it is hard to determine the effects of the emigration of particular types of workers on sending countries, such as the effects of the outmigration of health-care workers, since there is no good way to measure the social costs of brain drain on those left behind.

As the migration cost database expands, it is important to standardize questions and methodologies to obtain reliable data that allows comparisons between corridors and to suggest options to reduce worker-paid migration costs. It is also important to consider alternative ways of collecting migration cost data, including via interviews with the recruiters and agents who move most migrant workers over borders. Especially in corridors with cost data obtained from workers, it would be useful to interview recruiters and agents to learn what they say workers pay and compare worker-reported cost data with that reported by recruiters and agents.

Recruiters and agents are the merchants of labour who move most migrant workers from one country to another. They are little understood, but generally have a shady reputation, thought to overcharge vulnerable low-skilled workers. However, too little is known about the tens of thousands of recruiters and agents who are the glue of the international labour migration system that moves millions of workers over borders – a lacuna that needs to be filled. ■

The potential of the 2010 population and housing census round for international migration analysis

Sabrina Juran and Rachel Snow[1]

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015 and the focus within the Agenda on integrating international migration within global development policy, the international community agreed to create a coherent and comprehensive policy framework, "to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration involving full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of migrants regardless of migration status, of refugees and of displaced persons."[2] The General Assembly concurred on 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 169 targets and 230 indicators aimed at reducing poverty and ensuring sustainable development. The SDG indicator that best advances the likelihood that the status, rights and well-being of migrants will be tracked over the coming 15 years is 17.18.1, "Proportion of sustainable development indicators produced at the national level with full disaggregation when relevant to the target, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics", because the corresponding target (17.18) includes *migratory status* within the list of factors for expected disaggregation *of all SDG indicators*.

The potential impact of including this simple clause cannot be over-estimated for advancing research on the status and trends of migrant health, education, employment, experience of discrimination or violence, access to mobile or other assets, and a wide range of other benefits and/or deprivations.[3,4] The emerging SDG indicator data could provide a huge advance in current knowledge, which is hindered by limited availability of timely, reliable and quality statistics.

The paucity of quality migration data and analysis has long been recognized and requires major investment. Data sources to inform the issue of international migration include decennial population and housing censuses, population registers, civil registration and other administrative data, residence permits and various household surveys, including labour force surveys.

The unique benefit of a population and housing census, despite infrequent conduct, is that it "represents the entire statistical universe, down to the smallest geographical unit, of a country or region."[5] Inevitably, census data underestimate the number of migrants or undocumented migrants, in particular when migrants do not register for census purposes.[6] Population censuses nonetheless provide a comprehensive source of internationally comparable information because they include questions that can generate information at low levels of resolution relevant to the phenomenon of international migration, including details on country of birth, country of citizenship, country of residence one year or five years prior to the census, and year of arrival in the country.[7]

While providing a potentially valuable source of data on international migration, censuses are sometimes conducted infrequently or the data from census are not fully released or remain under-analysed.

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2   United Nations General Assembly, "Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", resolution adopted on 25 September 2015, A/RES/70/1, p. 8.

3   S. Juran, *Crossing the Border* (New York, 2016).

4   Commission on International Migration Data for Development Research and Policy, Center for Global Development, *Migrants Count: Five Steps Toward Better Migration Data* (Washington, D.C., 2009).

5   United Nations Population Fund, Census, retrieved 11 August 2016. Available from www.unfpa.org/census

6   Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, International Migration Database, retrieved 15 September 2016. Available from https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=MIG

7   Commission on International Migration Data for Development Research and Policy, Center for Global Development, *Migrants Count*.

High-density census data, which are part of the existing statistical infrastructure of most countries, allow for disaggregation of the national population by sex, age, disability, and migrant status, among other factors. As such, national census data will be the most important source of data for fulfilling SDG target 17.18, and disaggregating the range of all other SDGs by migration status.[8]

Ideally every 10 years countries conduct a population and housing census, which is a complex exercise that requires detailed planning of enumeration methods, applied technology, privacy and confidentiality regulations, data collection, data processing and imputation, data analysis and dissemination, archiving, and quality control evaluations of coverage and quality.[9] In many countries, a population and housing census is the principal source of data on the number, distribution and characteristics of a population, including international migrants. Compared to household or population-based surveys or population registers, the unique advantage provided by a population and housing census is the near-universal representation of the population of a country, down to the smallest geographical unit. Depending on the detail of the census questionnaire, this national data collection exercise provides information on the underlying phenomena of social and economic characteristics of the population, and may represent the primary data source for identifying certain social, demographic and economic exclusions, and constraints for small geographical areas or sub-populations. While censuses remain the primary source for internationally comparable information on the number and characteristics of international migrants, delays in the processing and dissemination of census results remain challenging.

In the 2010 census round, 214 countries or areas conducted at least one census, including countries that conducted a traditional census in person, by post or online, or based their detailed population "census" statistics on population registers, administrative records, sample surveys, other sources or a combination of these sources. Twenty-one countries

or areas did not conduct a population and housing census during the 2010 round.[10]

The Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses Revision 2[11] produced by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) advocates the inclusion of at least three core questions on 1) country of birth, 2) citizenship, and 3) year or period of arrival to inform the topic of international migration. The census database[12] maintained by the Demographic Statistics Section of the UNSD contains census questionnaires from the 2010 census round, allowing one to review the questionnaires from 149 countries (as of October 2016).

During the 2010 census round, more than 87 per cent of the 149 countries for which data are available in the UNSD database integrated a question in their censuses about country of birth, 75 per cent asked for citizenship, and 50.3 per cent asked for the year or period of arrival. With respect to country of birth, 129 countries established the total number of foreign-born and native-born people among their population based on the question on country of birth.

The question on citizenship or nationality was included in 112 national census questionnaires.[13] While all but two European countries and a large majority of countries in Africa included a question on either topic in their census questionnaires, only 50 per cent of all North and South American countries collected these data. However, alternative questions regarding citizenship by birth and/or naturalization as well as foreigners allow for the calculation of the foreign population.

The question on year or period of arrival was the least likely to have been asked, among the three

8   S. Helleringer, "Monitoring demographic indicators for the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): A review of proposed approaches and opportunities" (International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, 2015).

9   S. Juran and A.L. Pistiner, "The 2010 round of population and housing censuses, 2005–2014" (forthcoming).

10 United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme data, retrieved 15 September 2016. Available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/censusdates.htm

11 UNSD, DESA, *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses Revision 2*, Series M No. 67/Rev.2 (New York, United Nations, 2008).

12 UNSD, DESA, 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme data, retrieved 11 August 2016. Available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/censusquest.htm

13 UNSD, DESA, "Implementation of United Nations recommendations for population census topics in the 2010 round" (United Nations Secretariat, 2013).

recommended questions. Overall, 75 countries asked for the year or period of arrival of the foreign-born members of the population to establish the length of stay of their migrant population. The highest inclusion of the question was found in North and South American census questionnaires. On the other hand, only 23 per cent of all African census questionnaires and only 21.2 per cent of Asian questionnaires included the question on year or period of arrival. Of the 75 countries that asked the question, the majority formulated the question to investigate the specific date or year of arrival.

Additional questions within the thematic area of international migration that were included in census questionnaires in the 2010 round referred to previous country of residence, duration of intended stay and reason for arrival/return.[14]

As migration, migrants and mobility are increasingly being considered in the context of global development and in national planning strategies, the demand for timely, accurate, nationally relevant, and internationally comparable migration data and indicators is expected to rise.

Within the context of the call to disaggregate all relevant SDG indicators by migration status (SDG indicator 17.18.1), the current review was undertaken to assess the number of population and housing censuses that collected the core question on migration status in the 2010 census round, thereby enabling such disaggregation. The finding that 87 per cent of the 149 countries for which census questionnaire information is available included a question about country of birth suggests that disaggregation of SDG data by migration status should be possible for a majority of countries. The finding that only 50.3 per cent asked for the year or period of arrival will limit opportunities to disaggregate by length of migration. All future population and housing censuses should be encouraged to include these core questions.

The variety of migration-related questions being asked within different national censuses offers a range of future options for standardization, and we encourage consideration of an expanded set of questions that may differentiate important vulnerabilities and shortfalls among migrants; empirical analysis is warranted to identify such potential questions.

Finally, collection of census data does not consistently translate into the widespread availability of such data, even to government researchers, let alone to interested citizens of the countries concerned. It is important to advocate the greater release of population and census data and to exploit migration data to their fullest use. This appeal is consistent with the report of the Secretary-General on international migration statistics, presented to the United Nations Statistical Commission at its forty-fifth session in 2016, which emphasized that more needs to be done to encourage the tabulation and dissemination of international migration data from population and housing censuses in order to enhance the exchange of statistical information between countries, the identification of factors contributing to human vulnerability, and to inform public policies that will "serve first those furthest behind".[15] ∎

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14 Ibid.

15 United Nations General Assembly, "International migration and development: Report of the Secretary-General", A/69/207 (2014).

The global need for better data on international migration and the special potential of household surveys

Richard E. Bilsborrow[1]

Introduction: The need for better data on international migration as recognized by international organizations

The generally positive effect of international migration on migrants and on development in countries of origin and destination has come to be recognized in United Nations (UN) documents including reports of the Secretary-General (e.g. the 2006 report) as well as in many academic studies. Furthermore, continuing and widening income/wage gaps between developed and developing countries, conflicts within and between countries, wide differences in fertility/mortality and population growth and aging, natural disasters and climate change, differences in the timing of economic cycles and crises around the world, increasingly global and interconnected international trade and production, and continuing dramatic improvements in technologies relating to communications and transportation systems all point towards international migration being an even more important factor in socioeconomic development and policy debates for decades into the twenty-first century. Yet, data on the international migration of people are said to be much inferior to that of goods and capital, amounting to "an enormous blind spot" (CGD, 2009:v). This limits our knowledge of not only the facts on migration flows and stocks but also on how to utilize data to "maximize the benefits and minimize the costs of migration for sending and receiving countries . . . and has stunted global understanding and domestic political discourse on a critical development issue" (ibid.). Governments and international agencies need to address these issues by developing approaches to collect, analyse and disseminate better data on international migration.

For some decades, UN and other international organizations, governments and other stakeholders have recognized deficiencies in the data on international migration and on understanding its relationships with development. For example, in the Resolution on International Migration and Development adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2014 (UN General Assembly, 2015), the Assembly referenced previous resolutions since 2003 on the topic, noting the important and complex interrelationships between migration and development, the frequent vulnerability of migrants including trafficked women and children and other human rights violations, the importance of remittance flows for recipient households' welfare and reducing poverty, the high costs of sending remittances, the challenges of irregular migration, the need to reduce fees paid to labour recruiters, and the importance of recognizing the contribution of international migration to helping countries meet the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Resolution also directly addressed the issue of data inadequacy and its relationship to policy as follows:

> . . . **Emphasizes the need for reliable, accurate, disaggregated, nationally relevant and internationally comparable statistical data and indicators on international migration, including . . . on the contributions of migrants to development in countries of origin and . . . destination to facilitate the design of evidence-based policymaking (para. 27).**

Many other documents of the UN and other international organizations have made similar observations, and urged improvements in data, including the UN (2015) declaration from the meeting on financing for development, in Addis Ababa, in its final declaration: "High-quality disaggregated data is an essential input for smart and transparent decision-making, . . . including in support of the post-2015 agenda and its means of implementation, and can improve policymaking at all levels (para. 125) . . . disaggregated by sex, age, geography, income, race, ethnicity, migratory status . . . (para. 126). The World Bank tracks international remittance flows sent back to origin households and communities in developing countries from household members migrating to developed countries, with such total transfers reaching USD 432 billion in 2015

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(worldbank.org, 2016). In addition, the 2016 report of the UN Secretary-General on international migration and development recognizes the ongoing activities of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the International Organization for Migration and the Economic Commission for Europe. Data issues continue to receive attention, leading up to the creation of the Global Compact on Migration set out in the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, in its reference to the 2030 Agenda, including on refugees and migrants (para. 17). In addition, it states: "we recognize the importance of improved data collection, particularly by national authorities, and will enhance international cooperation to this end, including through capacity-building, financial support and technical assistance. 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" (para. 40).

Existing sources of data and their inherent limitations

The two main traditional sources of comprehensive demographic data in countries are national censuses of population and continuous population registers, usually the responsibility of the government census/statistical office, referred hereafter as the National Statistical Office (NSO). For international migrants (immigrants and emigrants), additional data sources exist in some countries, of varying quality: (a) administrative sources, such as registers of foreign workers (with work permits or not) or of foreigners (taken as non-citizens usually) living in the country; and (b) admission/border statistics based on monitoring of people entering and leaving the country by crossing the border at land crossings, seaports or airports. These existing sources have shortcomings in their coverage of persons entering/leaving, the data they collect on those persons, or both, but have much potential to be improved (see: UN Statistical Office, 1998 and forthcoming; and Bilsborrow et al., 1997).

For most countries, the main data sources on international migration are population censuses, along with continuous population registers in the countries that have them. Most censuses have data for each person on only the place/country and date of birth (i.e. the foreign born population), making this the main data source for the UN estimates of international

migration (see, for instance: unpopulation.org, 2015). However, this provides data on only *lifetime* migrant stocks, and no data on recent migration flows in or out of the country. It was recommended at the 2006 UN Expert Meeting on International Migration Data and repeated by the Center for Global Development (CGD) (2009:2) that countries in the 2010 round of population censuses collect data on all three aspects of international migration – country of birth, country of citizenship and country of previous residence (including whether arrived in the current country within the past x (e.g. two or five) years, or on the date of (last) arrival; see: UN Statistical Office, forthcoming). The CGD expert report also made four other recommendations: better exploit existing administrative data sources, from population registers to registers of foreigners and foreign workers; compile data from existing labour force surveys in a harmonized database; (have governments) provide public access to microdata files on individuals and households while protecting confidentiality; and create and insert special modules on migration in existing household survey programmes, including labour force surveys.

The CGD noted significant advances in data on international migration already under way at that time in various organizations, including the UN Population Division's creation of the Global Migration Database. Other organizations compiling better and harmonized data for their countries/regions include the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (International Migration Database), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (Statistical Online Population Database, which covers refugees, asylum seekers, returned refugees, internally displaced persons protected/assisted by UNHCR, stateless persons and other persons of concern to the organization), the European Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (REDATAM), the Migration Policy Institute (MPI Data Hub), the World Bank (Global Bilateral Migration Database) and the University of Sussex (Global Migrant Origin Database).

Regarding census data, the UN, in the 2000 round of censuses (2005–2014), referred to around 90 per cent of the world's countries conducting a census between 1995 and 2004, 79 per cent of those countries collected country-of-birth data, 55 per cent obtained data on country of citizenship, and 36 per cent collected data on country of previous residence five years ago. Certainly, there has been some increase in these percentages in the 2010 round.

With respect to administrative data, improvements usually need to begin at the country level, with better data-sharing and consistent definitions used by the Ministry of Interior (and others involved in administrative data on immigrants or border statistics) and the NSO. This is occurring in some countries but not enough. Regarding labour force surveys, some developing countries have added modules of questions on international migration, beginning with four countries incorporating experimental modules around 2006 (Armenia, Ecuador, Egypt and Thailand) and continuing more recently in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine (ILO, 2013a and 2013b). The European Union has developed a common set of questions to include in all member countries' labour force surveys, which has led to an annual updated database.

But it is not enough for countries to collect better data. They need to be widely shared and disseminated and analysed to discover how to improve them. In some countries, data are not published/reported, and in others they are not even shared among the key, responsible government agencies, much less with researchers or international agencies. This is the case despite in the past half century most governments and producers of data such as via surveys of many kinds coming to share data, providing anonymous public use files. On a broad, multi-country basis the first to do this in the demographic sphere was the World Fertility Survey with its Standard Record Files for its dozens of participating developing countries starting in the 1970s. This continued with the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) involving over 300 surveys in around 100 countries by now and the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) of the World Bank. In a project in 2009–2011 to fund the collection of data on migration in six sub-Saharan African countries, as a condition for receiving funding from the World Bank, the responsible data collection organization in the country (but a private firm, not the NSO) was required to commit to make all the data publicly available through the World Bank website. In addition, microdata files for 82 countries (277 censuses) have been collected and harmonized from censuses of population by the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series-International (IPUMS-I) project of the University of Minnesota,[2] and can be acquired by anyone, with confidentiality of the respondents protected.

An idea that has attracted considerable attention is that of developing short modules of questions on international migration to attach to existing household surveys. Such modules could be on immigrants, emigrants, return migrants and/or remittances. They could include a short core module for all countries plus optional modules to add according to country needs and interests, but still using standardized questions. Adding modules to existing surveys evidently has a huge advantage in terms of cost, as it involves only a small marginal cost of adding a few questions to an existing questionnaire in an ongoing survey programme already funded. This implies a small increase in the length of the questionnaire (a bit more paper and/or programming time to programme the added questions if tablets are being used for data collection), in time for interviewer training, in the length of the interview by a minute or two, and then small increases in the time to enter, clean and analyse the additional data. Summing all these gives the total marginal cost of adding the questions, which seems very unlikely to exceed 5 per cent of the total survey cost.

Nevertheless, to do this, to assess the usefulness of adding questions on migration to an existing household survey, several questions need to be asked first, relating to the peculiar characteristics of international migration, especially the rareness of international migrants ("rare elements") (see: Kish, 1965; Sudman et al., 1988; Bilsborrow et al., 1997), particularly recent immigrants or emigrants from a household, compared to the size of a country's total population. Thus, based on the data from the UN 2009 Wall Chart on International Migration, 214 million persons were estimated to be living in a country other than that of their birth, or 3.1 per cent of the world total. This is the total accumulated stock, a stock which was 10–20 per cent or more of the total population in some of the major developed countries of preferred destination. But how many of these, what percentage of the country total, would have come (or left, for countries of mainly emigration) recently, say, within the previous five years? The UN data show how small this is: only three countries (with over 1 million population) in the world had a net annual immigration rate as high as 1 per cent in 2005–2010, and only two had a net annual emigration rate over 1 per cent. Thus, using the commonly recommended five-year cut-off reference period would yield few countries where a random sample would result in more than, say, 2 per cent of the population to be recent international migrants within the previous five years,

2   Website accessed 23 November 2016.

or say one in 60 households. Therefore, in a typical household survey of 10,000 households, only around 167 would have one or more migrants. This is rather small for the usual desired disaggregations by age, sex, education and so on, plus some additional geographic disaggregation such as by region/province/state or major city in the case of a destination (receiving) country, or by country of destination, for a (sending) country focusing on emigration, not to mention any cross-tabulations.

Hence, to evaluate whether it could be worth adding questions on international migration to an existing household survey, several questions should be asked first:

- What is the sample size, the geographic coverage, and the prevalence of migrants of interest in the country or region of interest? The first and third together determine the likely number of migrants/households with migrants to be found in the usual random selection of households used in surveys to represent the population. Will the survey produce data on enough migrants to justify the additional cost? National coverage is desirable for most surveys, but since migrants tend to be concentrated in particular regions/cities, it is clear that selecting a random sample does not lead to efficient data collection for studying migration.

- What is the focus of the survey and hence the availability already of other data useful in the study of migration, such as household members' main demographic (age, sex, education, marital status) and economic characteristics (employment/ unemployment status, occupation, wage or income from all sources which may already include remittances)? This tends to make labour force or other economic surveys more useful than those focusing on fertility, health, nutrition, political issues and other topics.

- Are any data already collected in the survey questionnaire to identify international migrants? This increases the chance of convincing the survey managers to accept additional questions and providing a place for them in the questionnaire. Thus, if the questionnaire covers country of birth or citizenship, duration of residence in the current house or key events that may trigger migration (marriage/divorce, education), this provides an entry for additional questions.

- Are any retrospective data collected on individuals/the household? What is desired is data on the situation of migrants and their households of origin or destination *at or just prior to the time of immigration/emigration*. Such data are vital to assess the determinants and/or consequences of migration for migrants and their households (see discussion of "appropriate comparison groups" in Bilsborrow et al., 1997).

Focusing on developing countries, there are several commonly administered types of surveys that can be considered potential candidates for adding questions on international migration, the largest being national surveys following or linked to the most recent census or to a population register, such as a sample of a recent census (but it should be soon after a census). Beyond this, the majority undertake national labour force surveys, often annually, while nearly as many (around 100) have undertaken DHS surveys, though not annually. The World Bank has funded and supervised LSMS surveys in over 40 countries. The vast majority of labour force surveys and DHS surveys collect no data on migration beyond place of birth. LSMS surveys, in contrast, do collect some basic data on internal migration, on last change of residence, but only a few DHS and LSMS surveys have collected data on international migration. Many countries also undertake other types of national household surveys of potential interest, including nutrition surveys and household budget (in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)) and income–consumption surveys. A review of the content of these surveys up to around 2010 (e.g. in CIS countries) (see: Bilsborrow and Lomaia, 2011) found none collecting more than a minimal amount of data on migration (e.g. value of monetary remittances received). Moreover, the most common sample size of these surveys is 5,000–20,000 households, which is small for collecting data on international migrants.

Thus, in the absence of a focus on migration, the vast majority of these existing surveys are poor candidates for adding on modules on international migrants due to: (a) a sample size insufficient to yield data on enough recent migrants, who are "rare elements"; and (b) a questionnaire that is not designed to obtain data on migrants (and non-migrants) at the time of migration. In fact, data are needed on not only migrants prior to migration but also on non-migrants to formulate migration functions to study the determinants of migration, since the population at risk of migrating comprises migrants and non-migrants in the country

of origin. To study the consequences of migration for the migrants, the same parallel data are needed for the same two population groups. But household survey questionnaires are not structured this way unless their focus is on migration. This is true of labour force surveys as well. However, they are still usually the best candidates for adding modules of questions on international migration, because: (a) they are carried out already by the NSO of the developing country regularly, with national coverage and secure funding; (b) they often have a relatively large sample size (e.g. over 40,000 households); and (c) they already collect much useful information on individuals (e.g. age sex, education, employment status, occupation, wage, time worked) and households (e.g. size, income, location). Evidently, it would not be difficult to add questions on items such as citizenship, visa status, and time when arrived or left for an immigrant to the household or a recent emigrant. But it would be a stretch to also include multiple questions on emigrants or immigrants pertaining to their situation just prior to migration, much less for non-migrants.

Censuses as well as the other traditional government data collection systems (e.g. continuous population registers, registers of foreigners, border statistics) have inherent limitations of space and format that preclude their use for obtaining more data on migrants than a few basic characteristics, so realistically it is only household surveys that can aspire to collect data that make possible investigating the *determinants* or *consequences* of migration. The requirements of such surveys are implied by the questions enumerated above, including a sample size and design that produces a substantial number of migrants and a questionnaire design that collects retrospective data on migrants and non-migrants. But, as noted above, unfortunately few existing household surveys will yield data on an adequate number of recent migrants, or will accommodate a module on retrospective data. Labour force surveys may have large enough sample sizes and a content that is reasonable to add questions in order to collect more detailed data on migrants, though with a random sample it is still a question of the tail wagging the dog. How many countries will be willing to add modules applicable to only 1–3 per cent of the respondents?

Therefore, there is usually no alternative but to design a specialized survey on migration. This will involve stratification of areas in the country according to the prevalence of migrants, then the use of oversampling to select primary and secondary sampling areas with

more migrants of interest, and finally two-phase sampling in the last stage (Bilsborrow et al., 1997; Groenewold and Bilsborrow, 2008; Bilsborrow, 2013). It has been demonstrated (see projects mentioned below) that adequate quantity and quality of data can be obtained from specialized surveys of migration using these sampling methods and appropriate questionnaire designs, and then analysed to yield results useful for policymakers.

Quick precis on ongoing multi-country efforts to improve the collection and production of data on international migration based on household surveys

On international migration, many developed countries including the United States, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and others undertake national, government-sponsored surveys on immigrants living in the country. A few developing countries have also done this, with their own resources, usually focusing on emigrants (e.g. Mexico, Morocco, Philippines). But the huge and growing size of remittance flows has awakened international institutions to the large role international migration and subsequent remittance flows back to origin-country households can play in development and poverty reduction. This has led to several multi-country efforts to design and conduct single-round household surveys on international migration, funded mostly by multilateral donors. The first was the Push-Pulls project of the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute in 1997–1998, which designed and supported the implementation of specialized household surveys on international migration (focusing on emigration) from five developing countries (Egypt, Ghana, Morocco, Senegal and Turkey) linked to surveys on immigrants in Spain and Italy (Schoorl et al., 2000), funded by the European Commission/Eurostat. This was followed by lower-budget household surveys implemented by World Bank-funded non-governmental organizations focusing on internal and international migration in six sub-Saharan Africa countries in 2009–2011 (see World Bank website); a separate World Bank-supported MIRPAL project for CIS countries, to coordinate surveys in countries of origin and destination (mainly the Russian Federation); the Migration from Africa to Europe (MAFE) project of the French Institute for Demographic Studies (Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques (INED) — see MAFE on the INED website) involving surveys on migration from three African countries to five West European countries;

and finally, an ongoing programme of MEDSTAT/ Mediterranean Household International Migration Surveys (MED-HIMS) (Farid et al., 2015) developed with the NSOs in the region to design and conduct household surveys on emigration in eight developing countries of the Mediterranean region (Egypt and Jordan having completed so far), funded by the European Union, World Bank, UNHCR and other donors.

Each of these multi-country projects has used similar sampling methods and questionnaires to collect *comparable data in the participating countries*, making possible intraproject country comparisons. Significant similarities as well as major differences exist in the methodologies used across these projects. But their existence illustrates both the broad interest in collecting much better data on international migration and the feasibility of doing so via specialized surveys. Could it be possible to develop a world migration survey that would lead to the collection of comparable data not just for particular regions or "migration systems" (Zlotnik, 1987 and 1992; Kritz and Zlotnik, 1992) but for most of the whole world? Previous work has shown that the technical problems can be dealt with, so the question is: Can the political will be mustered?

A world migration survey?

Thus, is it possible to think of developing a common approach that could be used to collect comparable data on international migration from most of the world's countries, including major ones of emigration and immigration – something approaching a world migration survey, akin to the World Fertility Survey and its successor DHS? This topic has been raised informally over many years, but perhaps first explicitly brought up at an international forum by Beauchemin (2013 and 2014).

The case for it

The case for a large-scale coordinated approach begins with reference to the increasing importance of international migration in the world as measured by the stocks and flows of migrants, the size of remittance transfers and their impacts on households and on development in developing countries, and the inability (and impracticality) of using existing data-collection instruments to collect the appropriate detailed data.

In addition, many important policy questions regarding international migration cannot be answered from existing data sources. Some of the questions below have been adapted from the Commission on International Migration Data for Development Research and Policy of the CGD (2009) for this illustrative, non-comprehensive list, while others are new:

1. What are the stocks of expatriates (citizens living abroad) from each country? What are their main characteristics – age, gender, education, school attendance, occupation and so on? Do they send remittances? Invest in their origin country? Intend to return?

2. What are the differences in the characteristics of those who leave and those who return? Of those who choose one destination versus others? What differences are there in the consequences for the emigrants to different countries of destination? In the policy implications?

3. How much temporary and short-term international migration is there? How much circulation? As Beauchemin (2013:3) states, these three types of migrants are often seen as a "triple-win scenario", benefitting themselves and their origin and destination countries. But does this usually occur?

4. How common is return migration? What are its consequences in different origin countries? How can this knowledge be harnessed better for development? How often do return migrants bring back skills, education or money, and invest in development? Why is it uncommon, and how can it be increased?

5. Why do people emigrate – what are the major causes of individual and household migration, apart from massive displacements due to natural disasters, civil wars and wars between countries? How important are economic factors, such as wage and income gaps, compared to differences in living conditions and amenities, geographic propinquity, migration networks and access to information, government visa and other policies and restrictions, practices of recruiters, etc.?

6. What are the factors that determine the *timing* of migration, that is, micro-triggering events such as losing/finding a job, marriage/divorce, seeking/completing education and retirement, among others, and how does their importance compare with that of macro-triggering events such as economic cycles in countries of origin and potential destinations?

7. How do government policies and practices affect and shape immigration and emigration? Temporary versus "permanent" migration, return migration? Undocumented migration? How does the status of irregular migrants compare with that of documented migrants?

Two kinds of data and analysis are necessary to provide a far superior basis for developing and improving policies that maximize the benefits of migration to countries relative to their costs. First, more reliable data are needed on the numbers, characteristics, and timing of movements into and out of countries. Most of this must come from existing government sources, such as population censuses and large national surveys (such as large labour force surveys or other large-sample recurring surveys (such as the American Community Survey covering 300,000 different households/month in a year). Second, we need much more detailed data on migrants as well as non-migrants and their households, to assess the determinants and consequences of migration for the migrants, their households, and their communities and countries of origin and destination. This will in turn provide a wealth of findings that will make possible providing much more solid, science-based policy recommendations. This requires detailed data from specialized surveys on migration.

To achieve the goal of a world migration survey, governments of major sending and receiving countries will need to work together with international organizations to develop both a survey plan and a funding mechanism. It should be noted that the multi-country programmes mentioned above generally did not fully achieve their aims due to insufficient or unreliable funding: surveys were delayed or not done in some target countries, and/or analyses were only completed superficially – much more could have been done. Thus, funding with a secure time frame is crucial. The technical and managerial issues appear manageable: common definitions/concepts and survey methodologies, including sampling approaches and questionnaire modules, can likely be developed and agreed upon to ensure consistency in definitions, so that, for instance, data on emigrants from countries of origin will match that on the same persons immigrating in countries of destination. Only such specialized surveys can produce the detailed data to facilitate understanding the determinants and consequences of migration, the linkages between migration and development, and, accordingly, policy implications.

Potential obstacles

The major obstacles concern funding and politics. Regarding the latter, institutional responsibilities and coordination will need to be established and sited, amidst divergent country interests. Proper and regular administration of the surveys will require secure funding from bilateral and multilateral sources probably. Many developing countries, the major beneficiaries of the new knowledge and improved policies that knowledge will make possible, may plead poverty and resist allocating their own government funds to share the costs, though most can likely be counted upon to make important in-kind contributions, such as personnel, office space, and vehicles available and of course sample frames. Achieving coordination across international organizations which have their own mandates and different interests will be a second challenge, to assign responsibilities to staff up a responsible centre to coordinate global efforts and provide technical assistance (also requiring some national and international consultants).

The completed and ongoing multi-country projects (cited above) have yielded and are yielding – or soon will yield – much information and findings useful for developing a world migration survey programme. Results from these recent past and current survey programmes should be compiled, evaluated and compared, for relevant methodological lessons as a first step. In addition, more intensive analyses could be carried out on the determinants and consequences of migration from these new, rich data sets, to also inform the development of a world migration survey programme. Many developing countries lack the capacity to properly design or administer the household survey, much less to process the data or collaborate in its analysis and interpretation. Therefore, there will need to be a significant international training component, which could be partly south–south to keep costs down.

Conclusion

The objective of the Second High-level Dialogue (HLD) on International Migration and Development (2013) was to identify "concrete measures to strengthen coherence and cooperation . . . to enhance the benefits of international migration for migrants and countries alike and its important links to development" (UN Resolution A/RES/67/219, cited in Beauchemin, 2013:4). The next year a UN General Assembly Resolution (adopted in 2014)

recommended holding a Third HLD on International Migration and Development by no later than 2019, to review follow-up from the Second HLD (2013) and to advance the discussion on the multidimensional aspects of international migration.

Certainly, progress is ongoing and can be strengthened to improve existing government data-collection instruments and add migration modules to existing large sample surveys. But only specialized surveys can provide the rich data that, widely shared and thoroughly analysed, can tell us so much more. In the case of the demographic variable fertility, data, theory, and understanding of fertility and how policies can affect it have taken a quantum leap with the World Fertility Survey and DHS programmes since 1967, while the field of migration continues to limp, comparatively, in the Middle Ages. With the rapidly growing interest in migration and its linkages to development, is it not time to take a step in the same direction for migration, towards a Renaissance in the field, half a century later? ■

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Improving data on migration:
A 10-point plan

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the International Organization for Migration or Eurasylum Ltd.

Frank Laczko[1]

Introduction

I t is often said that good data on migration are essential if migration is to be managed effectively. Yet, in reality, global data on migration are often scarce, inaccessible or several years old. As long ago as 1998, the United Nations (UN) noted that "despite the growing importance of international migration and the concerns it often raises, the necessary statistics to characterize migration flows, monitor changes over time and provide [g]overnments with a solid basis for the formulation and implementation of policy are very often lacking".[2] In 2008, the Center for Global Development convened a commission of experts to discuss steps to improve data on international migration. Their report cites that "the nonexistence or inaccessibility of detailed, comparable, disaggregated data on migrant stocks and flows is the greatest obstacle to the formulation of evidence-based policies to maximize the benefits of migration for economic development".[3]

While the paucity of data on migration has been recognized for many years, States have yet to agree on how best to address migration data gaps. The main recommendations to improve statistics on migration produced by the UN were released in 1998 (nearly 20 years ago).[4] However, improving data on migration seems likely to become a more important priority for States in the future. First, because migration is now included in the framework for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As can be seen in the annex in this article, there are numerous references to migration in the SDGs, the most prominent of which is target 10.7, which recommends that States "facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies". Second, the 2016 New York Declaration, which outlines how the international community should respond to large-scale movements of refugees and migrants, includes several references to the importance of collecting better data on migration.[5]

Together, these two developments provide a new opportunity for the international community to agree on a set of priorities to improve data on international migration in the coming years. The challenge now is for countries to come together to agree upon what should be the priorities to improve data on international migration. The aim of this short paper is to facilitate a discussion about what might be some of the priorities for action. The paper begins by providing a brief assessment of the current international migration data challenges.[6]

Measuring migration: Brief overview of current data challenges

For many years, the UN has been reporting on global migrant stocks but has found it much more difficult to report on global migration flows and other aspects of migration. As the UN reported as long ago as 1998, "the lack of uniformity among States in respect of determining who is an international migrant has long

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2   Statistics Division, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration Revision 1* (New York, United Nations, 1998).

3   Commission on International Migration Data for Development Research and Policy, Center for Global Development, *Migrants Count: Five Steps Toward Better Migration Data* (Washington, D.C., 2009).

4   Statistics Division, UN DESA, *Recommendations on Statistics*.

5   The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants notes: "We recognize the importance of improved data collection, particularly by national authorities, and will enhance international cooperation to this end, including through capacity-building, financial support and technical assistance. 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."

6   This paper draws on presentations made at an IOM conference entitled "Improving Data on Migration", 2–3 December 2016, Federal Foreign Office, Berlin. Available from www.GMDAC.iom.int

been recognized as a key source of inconsistency in international migration statistics".[7] Only approximately one in four countries around the world regularly provides the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) Statistics Division with data on international migration flows.[8] In Asia, only 10 of the 48 countries in the region provided data on inflows and outflows of migrants between 2005 and 2014. While the best migration data often come from censuses, these can be several years old.[9] Moreover, some countries still do not even include a question about a person's country of birth or citizenship in their censuses.[10]

Censuses can only include a limited number of questions on migration and thus cannot provide the detailed information needed for a comprehensive analysis of either the causes or the consequences of international migration. Censuses can also not provide the timely data that is needed to identify which migrants are most at risk during their journeys or on arrival in a new country. Censuses may not even provide details of the year of migration, making it impossible to establish whether someone is a recent or long-term migrant. To conduct such analysis, more specialized household surveys of migrant populations are needed, but there is no global migration survey programme to help countries gather such data. Given that many migrants are undocumented, data on migrants in especially vulnerable situations is often very difficult to obtain.

The inclusion of migration in the SDGs and the references to migration in the New York Declaration present the international community with some new data challenges. The most prominent reference to migration in the SDGs is under Goal 10, target 10.7, which calls for countries to "facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies". The New York Declaration also reiterates this call. These terms, although commonly used, have not really been

fully defined for measurement purposes, although some pioneering work has been done recently to develop a migration governance index.[11]

To date, very few of the migration indicators linked to the SDGs are currently ranked as Tier I indicators by the UN DESA Statistics Division.[12] By "Tier I" the UN means "an indicator is conceptually clear, there is an established methodology and standards available, and data are regularly produced by countries".[13]

Another major challenge for data collection linked to the SDGs and migration is the call to ensure that "nobody is left behind". This implies that the SDG indicators will need to be disaggregated by a number of variables, including by migratory status. A key challenge will be to ensure that the SDG indicators relevant to migration, such as health, education, poverty and employment, are disaggregated as far as possible by migratory status. Given that approximately half of all migrants are women, many of whom can be in vulnerable situations, it will also be necessary to disaggregate migration data by gender.

To sum up, the most frequently cited global statistics in the annual report on migration and development submitted to the UN Secretary-General are the number of migrants in the world and the scale of remittances.[14] Broadly speaking, at the global level, there are data on the stock of migrants and the level of remittances, but we can say relatively little about the well-being of migrants, the reasons for migration, the skills of migrants, or the impact of migration policies and programmes. Large numbers of migrants remain invisible, as there is relatively little reliable data on undocumented or irregular migrants who can represent a significant share of the migrant population in many countries.

7   Statistics Division, UN DESA, *Recommendations on Statistics*.

8   K. Osaki-Tomita, "Migration and the SDGs", presentation delivered at the Conference on Improving Data on International Migration, 2–3 December 2016, Berlin. For more information, visit www.GMDAC.iom.int

9   The UN DESA Population Division recently noted, for example, that for 17 per cent of countries in Africa, the most recent data available from censuses referred to years prior to 2005.

10   UN DESA Population Division.

11   Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), *Measuring Well-Governed Migration: The 2016 Migration Governance Index* (London, 2016).

12   K. Osaki-Tomita, "Migration and the SDGs".

13   Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), "Tier classification for global SDG indicators", 21 December 2016. Available from https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-04/Tier%20Classification%20of%20SDG%20Indicators_21%20Dec%20for%20website.pdf

14   UN, 2013.

The reasons for the lack of data include both technical and political factors.[15] International migration is not easy to measure when there is a lack of agreement at the national level on how to define migration. States may also only be interested in collecting data on certain aspects of migration most relevant to their national interests. Countries of destination, for example, may be more interested in collecting data on irregular migration flows, while countries or origin may be more interested in collecting data on remittances. Developing an agenda to tackle global migration data gaps will require action at both the technical and political levels.

Way forward: 10-point plan

The 2008 final report of the Commission on International Migration Data for Development Research and Policy[16] makes five key recommendations:

1. Ensure that more censuses include basic questions on migration.

2. Use administrative data on international migrants more extensively.

3. Make better use of the migration data collected in labour force surveys.

4. Integrate migration modules into existing household surveys.

5. Make publicly available microdata from migration surveys and censuses.

These recommendations continue to remain valid. Census data will need to be disaggregated by migratory status if we are to explore whether migrants are being "left behind". The compilation and analysis of administrative data from national sources could provide a better indication of global migration flows and policy responses. Adding migration questions to existing surveys, such as household surveys, is a cost-effective way of gathering data on migration.

However, there is no formal mechanism or framework for monitoring progress towards these recommendations. At the same time, these five goals do not reflect how the world has changed since 2008. For example, today there is a much greater awareness of the potential of using Big Data to study migration patterns, and there are new requirements to report on the SDG indicators linked to migration. Below we suggest a further five recommendations which could be considered.

6. Monitor improvements in global data on migration.

How do we know if we are making progress in improving data on migration globally? What should be the criteria to measure advancements? Currently, there is no agreed set of criteria for measuring progress. It would be useful to develop an agreed set of indicators which could be monitored on an annual basis to provide an indication of how data on migration are improving each year at the global level. Each year a short annual report could be prepared to highlight the progress that is being made in addressing data gaps and needs. Such a report should also include data on the rights of migrants and migrants in a vulnerable situation.

Several criteria could be used for monitoring, including the five recommendations of the *Migrants Count* report and the current tier system used by the UN Statistics Division to rank SDG indicators. The three tiers are:

- Tier 1: Indicator conceptually clear, established methodology and standards available and data regularly produced.

- Tier 2: Indicator conceptually clear, established methodology and standards available but data are not regularly produced by countries.

- Tier 3: Indicator for which there are no established methodology and standards and data available.

Another challenge when developing a migration data monitoring framework is to agree on what needs to be measured. Terms such as "well-managed migration", "vulnerable migrants" and "safe migration" can be defined in different ways.[17] For example, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration Peter Sutherland notes "unfortunately, States have quite different conceptions of what 'well-managed migration' means in practice. Some would like it to mean more migration; others

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15 Center for Global Development, *Migrants Count.*

16 Ibid.

17 See the special fifth anniversary issue of *Migration Policy Practice*, October–December 2016.

no migration at all".[18] In fact, whether one is for or against migration, it is possible to agree upon the basic building blocks of a well-managed migration system.[19]

7. Enhance data dialogue.

While there is a broad-level agreement between countries that data on migration are important and need to be improved, there has been relatively little discussion at the global level about how best to address migration data gaps. A dedicated international forum on migration statistics could help to foster a greater dialogue between countries, which could help to identify common data gaps and priorities for action. Statistical projects and initiatives on migration are currently underway in many countries. However, these initiatives often remain fragmented, confined to each discipline and are not usually brought together and disseminated in a comprehensive manner. The new International Forum on Migration Statistics proposed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Organization for Migration and UN DESA, in partnership with many other agencies and stakeholders, will meet for the first time in January 2018 in Paris.[20] The Forum will provide an important opportunity to promote a "data dialogue" between countries of origin, destination and transit, which often have different data priorities and capacities.

8. Make better use of existing data.

As funds for producing new migration data are likely to be limited, it is essential that we make the best use of the data that already exist. At the national level, it is often the case that there are more data available than is commonly realized. The UN has also acknowledged that "not all the data produced at the national level reaches the international statistical system, due to poor coordination, deficiencies in reporting mechanisms and the challenge for States in complying with international standards".[21]

One glaring shortfall in the current migration data space is the absence of a comprehensive, one-stop shop for migration information and data – both in the form of timely textual analysis and, in particular, for data access and analysis purposes.[22]

Too often migration data are scattered within countries between different agencies and ministries, making it difficult to obtain an accurate understanding of national migration trends. In addition, migration data may be scattered between countries of origin, transit and destination. Migration profiles were first proposed by the European Commission in 2005 as a means to gather in one place all data relating to migration at the national level.[23] Migration profiles were not conceived to be merely statistical reports. The process of collecting and analysing the data was also intended to promote greater policy coherence. It was envisaged that such reports would be prepared by a number of ministries which would work together with other actors to collect and share migration data.

9. Exploit the potential of non-traditional sources of data.

An increasing amount of data on migration today is not generated by the national statistical offices of governments but by the private sector or international agencies. The unprecedentedly large amount of data automatically generated through the use of digital devices or web-based platforms and tools goes under the umbrella term of "Big Data". Innovations in technology and reductions in the cost of digital devices worldwide means that digital data are being produced in real time, at an unprecedented rate. In addition, the number and size of organizations working in the migration field on behalf of migrants has grown enormously in recent years, which in turn has generated more migration data.[24]

The exponential growth in the use of mobile phones, social media and Internet-based services worldwide

18 Report of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Migration Peter Sutherland to the UN Secretary-General, 2017.

19 EIU, *Measuring Well-Governed Migration.*

20 The International Forum on Migration Statistics will bring together producers, analysts and users of migration statistics. The event will enhance the exchange of information, promote mutual learning and facilitate cooperation among relevant stakeholders.

21 UN, "International migration and development: Report of the Secretary-General", 2014.

22 IOM, in collaboration with other agencies, is currently developing a global migration data portal; see http://gmdac.iom.int/

23 Commission of the European Communities, "Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Migration and Development: Some Concrete Orientations" (Brussels, 2005), p. 37.

24 The growth of IOM's operations means that it is generating more data than ever before. See www.GMDAC.iom.int for a summary of IOM's statistical activities from 2011 to 2015.

means that the "volume" of data available is larger than ever before in human history. The number of migration studies drawing on Big Data is still relatively limited but rapidly increasing.[25]

The use of Big Data comes with significant challenges. First, there are serious privacy, ethical and human rights issues related to the use of data inadvertently generated by users of mobile devices and web-based platforms. Risks to individual rights to privacy can even threaten personal security in conflict situations.[26] Public concerns over the use of Big Data for any purpose, including research, need to be identified and adequately addressed by policymakers, perhaps through the creation of a regulatory system setting out conditions and limits to access to and use of certain kinds of data.

10. Ensure that migration is integrated into national statistical development plans.

There is a growing awareness in the development community of the need to invest in data capacity-building. In 2014, the Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development, which was named by then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to "advise him on measures that need to be taken to close data gaps and to strengthen national statistical capacities",[27] published the report *A World That Counts: Mobilising the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development.* The report calls for more diverse, integrated, timely and trustworthy data. The report recommends a significant investment of funds to support the "development data revolution", following an assessment of capacity-development needs.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly calls for enhancing capacity-building to support national plans to implement the SDGs. Target 17.18 aims to enhance "capacity-building support to . . . increase significantly the 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". If we are to ensure that migrants are not "left behind" as countries make progress towards development, there will be a need for much better data on the health, education, employment and income status of migrants. Better data are also needed to help reduce the risks and costs associated with migration. Too many migrants are currently embarking on dangerous journeys, putting their lives at risk, while others are being severely exploited and trafficked. While progress has been made in recent years in gathering data on unsafe migration, much more could be done to monitor migrant fatalities globally.[28]

With a growing awareness of the need for a development data revolution, there are new opportunities to make a stronger case for migration data capacity-building. To realize these opportunities, it is essential that migration is integrated into wider efforts to improve data on sustainable development indicators. It is likely that only specialized surveys can provide the rich data needed to fully understand migratory flows and their impact. Some have suggested that there is a case for developing a world migration survey, as so many policy questions about migration cannot be fully answered using current sources of migration data.[29]

Conclusion

With migration high on the global policy agenda, there is a renewed opportunity to take action to improve statistics on international migration. There have been improvements in recent years in the availability, quality and comparability of data on international migration,[30] but much more needs to be done. The

25 F. Laczko and M. Rango, "Can Big Data help us achieve a "migration data revolution"?, *Migration Policy and Practice*, IV(2), April–June 2014.

26 E. Letouzé, "Big Data for development: What may determine success or failure?", presentation delivered at the OECD Technology Foresight, 22 October 2012, Paris. See www.oecd.org/

27 UN News Centre, "Data revolution advisory group named by UN Secretary-General", 29 August 2014. Available from www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48594#.WLPU51V96Uk

28 For an overview of current data gaps on this subject, see: IOM, Fatal Journeys Volume 2: Identification and Tracing of Dead and Missing Migrants (Geneva, 2016), available from http://publications.iom.int/books/fatal-journeys-volume-2-identification-and-tracing-dead-and-missing-migrants

29 R. Bilsborrow, "The global need for better data on international migration and the Special Potential of Household Surveys", background paper for the Conference on Improving Data on International Migration, 2–3 December 2016, Berlin.

30 For example, the UN Population Division, in collaboration with the UN Statistics Division, the World Bank and the University of Sussex, has developed the Global Migration Database. IOM has also significantly expanded its work on data by extending its Displacement Tracking Matrix to 40 countries around the world. See www.iom.int/

main recommendations on how to improve migration statistics produced by the UN are nearly 20 years old. This short article has suggested 10 areas where action could be taken to improve data on international migration.■

Annex: Examples of key migration-related references in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

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Goal 4 (education)

Target 4.b (scholarships)
By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries.

Goal 5 (gender equality)

Target 5.2 (gender-based violence)
Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

Goal 8 (employment and decent work)

Target 8.7 (ending modern slavery)
Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking, and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.

Target 8.8 (migrant-worker rights)
Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.

Goal 10 (reducing inequality within and between countries)

Target 10.7 (safe migration)
Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

Target 10.c (migrant remittances)
By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent.

Goal 16 (peaceful and inclusive societies)

Target 16.2 (trafficking of children)
End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

**Goal 17 (global partnership for sustainable development)**

Having specific and current data pertaining to a group's specific needs, especially in developing countries, helps increase the capacity to deliver migrant services.

Publications

**Migration, Environment and Climate Change:
Policy Brief Series Issue 1 | Vol. 3 | February 2017**
2017/12 pages/English
ISSN 2410-4930

Mongolia's harsh climate and the dependence of the nation's rural population on animal husbandry make it vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Mongolia is already experiencing dramatic rural-to-urban migration as a result of multiple factors, including declining livelihood opportunities in rural areas, a phenomenon exacerbated by environmental changes and natural disasters such as drought and dzud. Ongoing climate change is expected to present a growing challenge to the traditional pastoral way of life of many in Mongolia and likely to continue to impact human mobility.
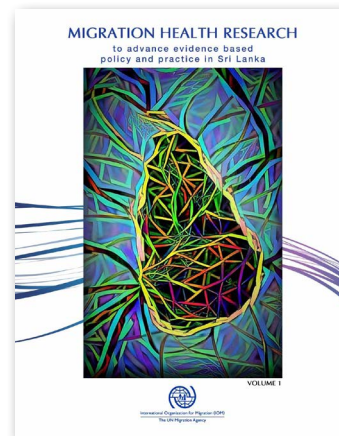
Migration Health Research to advance evidence based policy and practice in Sri Lanka
2017/224 pages
English

Despite the growing recognition of the importance that migration health plays in advancing global health and sustainable development goals, there is a paucity of technical guidance and "lessons learned" documents to guide Member States, international organizations, academia, civil society and other stakeholders seeking to develop effective migration health policies and interventions using evidence-based approaches. Governments today are faced with the challenge of integrating health needs of migrants into national plans, policies and strategies as outlined in the 61st World Health Assembly Resolution on Health of Migrants. Studying the health of migrants residing within and crossing national borders, across diverse linguistic and cultural gradients and with differing legal status pose challenges in evidence generation. The International Organization for Migration's migration health research series aims at sharing high-yield scientific papers and analytical commentaries aimed at advancing migration health policy and practice at national, regional and global levels. The first book of the series is a two-part volume profiling the development of the National Migration Health Policy and intervention framework in Sri Lanka, which to a large extent was driven by an evidence-informed, multisectoral approach.

Compilation of Research Papers Presented at the Conference on National Migration Policy Thematic Areas
2017/192 pages
English

According to the 2009 Nigeria migration profile, about 74 per cent of all immigrants living in Nigeria were from other ECOWAS countries. These dynamics of the migratory movements in Nigeria have continued and have sometimes led to stormy discourse on the relationships between migration and development.

Nigeria continues to face challenges in managing its migration due to insufficient research and empirical-based information on trends and patterns of migration in Nigeria to influence policies and interventions. There is an urgent need to increase the knowledge base and understanding of the factors shaping the migration context in Nigeria.

The research conference was conducted to forge a linkage between empirical analysis and contemporary theories in various aspects of migration based on theoretical reflection, and how this can be applied by institutions of government, policy gatekeepers, and other development actors to improve sector-specific and overall management of migration in Nigeria.

This publication is a compilation of six quality research papers presented during the Conference on National Migration Policy Thematic Areas. The papers covered various aspects of migration such as migration and urbanization, human trafficking, migration and development, displacement and internal migration.

The research papers provide empirical knowledge and information on the factors shaping migration issues in Nigeria and recommendations for appropriate interventions to address the challenges of migration in Nigeria.
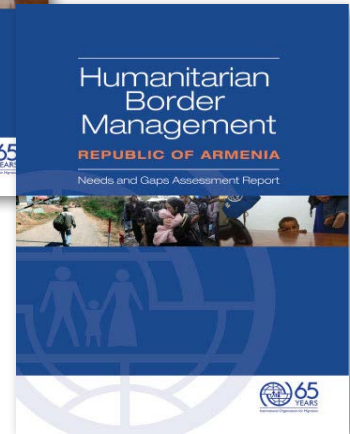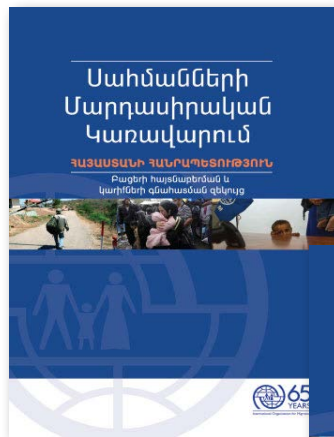

Humanitarian Border Management Republic of Armenia: Needs and Gaps Assessment Report
2016/78 pages
English, Armenian

The aims to strengthen the institutional capacities of the Armenian National Security Service and the Border Guards Troops to respond to migration crises and enhance their role in inter-agency cooperation. The report provides an introduction to the concept of Humanitarian Border Management (HBM), which has been developed by IOM within the Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF), and further information on HBM assessments and best practices.
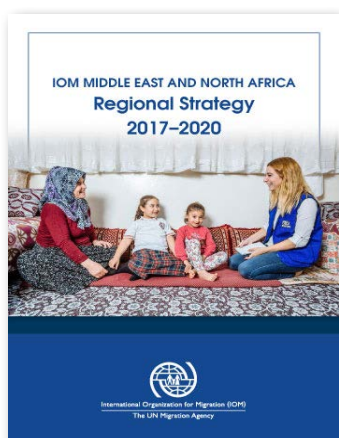
IOM Middle East and North Africa Regional Strategy 2017–2020
2017/28 pages
English

The International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Regional Strategy for the Middle East and North Africa sets out key objectives to guide IOM's operations, strategic positioning and policy and advocacy work for the period from 2017 to 2020. While not a summary of the full breadth of IOM programming in the region, the objectives represent priority areas for action to improve the conditions and impacts of migration for individuals and societies, address acute and structural challenges in migration governance, and contribute to meeting international commitments and standards.

The strategy aligns with the principles and objectives of the Migration Governance Framework, which was endorsed by IOM Member States in 2015. It also outlines subregional priorities for North Africa, the Mashreq and the Gulf countries and specifies cross-cutting issues and institutional principles that IOM adheres to throughout its work to maximize organizational effectiveness.
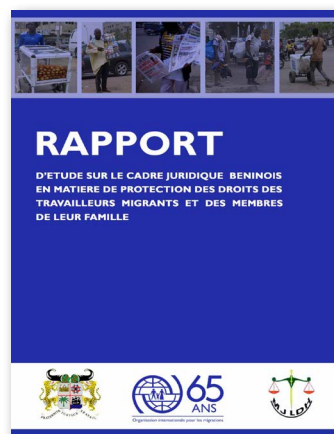
Rapport d'étude sur le cadre juridique béninois en matière de protection des droits des travailleurs migrants et des membres de leur famille
2017/82 pages
French

Le présent rapport sur le cadre juridique béninois en matière de protection des droits de travailleurs migrants et des membres de leur famille fait le point de l'arsenal juridique béninois en rapport avec les travailleurs migrants tout en soulignant les gaps à combler. Il met en relief le dispositif juridique international, régional et national spécifique aux travailleurs migrants et aux membres de leur famille au Bénin. Ce rapport finit par des recommandations pour une meilleure protection des droits des travailleurs migrants et des membres de leur famille au Bénin.

International Dialogue on Migration No. 26 : Follow-up and review of Migration in the Sustainable development Goals

This publication contains the report and complementary materials of the two workshops held in 2016 under the overarching theme "Follow-up and Review of Migration in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)" within the framework of the International Dialogue on Migration (IDM), IOM's principal forum for migration policy dialogue. The two workshops were held in New York on 29 February and 1 March, and respectively in Geneva on 11 and 12 October 2016.

The first workshop addressed the implications of migration being included in the Sustainable Development Goals, it discussed tools and mechanisms that could help Member States to measure progress on achieving relevant migration-related SDG targets, as well as it looked, inter alia, at options for "thematic review" of migration-related SDG targets and at the role of International Organizations in achieving the migration targets.

Building on the conclusions of the first workshop, the second workshop assessed progress in the implementation of the migration-related SDGs. It discussed the state of migration policies one year after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda from the perspective of States and other stakeholders in the migration area, presented best practices in countries making progress on the migration-related SDGs, and looked at how can the institutional capacity of States to measure and report on progress on achieving the migration-related targets be improved.

By dedicating its major policy discussion forum to discussions on implementation, follow-up and review of migration aspects of the SDGs, IOM wished to open a space for IOM Member States and relevant key players in migration and development area, to present strategies and measures that they are putting in place to achieve the migration-related targets, including good practices, challenges, lessons learned and areas that need support and shared experiences.

MPP Readers' Survey

Migration Policy Practice (*MPP*) was launched three years ago and the editors would now like to invite readers to spare a couple of minutes to participate in a short readers' satisfaction survey.

The purpose of this survey, which can be taken anonymously, is to help us identify our readers' profiles, the institutions they represent and their primary interests in our journal. The survey's responses will contribute, in particular, to adjusting and improving, as appropriate, *MPP*'s content and style, and thus the reader's experience.

Should you wish to participate in this survey, please **click here**.

Thank you.

Call for authors/Submission guidelines

Since its launch in October 2011, *Migration Policy Practice* has published over 155 articles by senior policymakers and distinguished migration policy experts from all over the world.

Past authors have included, inter alia:

Eric Adja, Director General of the International Migrants Remittances Observatory (IMRO) and Special Adviser to the President of Benin; *John K. Bingham*, Global Coordinator of civil society activities in the United Nations High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development and the Global Forum on Migration and Development; *Ambassador Eva Åkerman Börje*, Chair of the GFMD 2013-2014; *Mark Cully*, Chief Economist at the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection; *António Guterres*, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; *Khalid Koser*, Chair of the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Migration; *Khalid Malik*, Director of the Human Development Report Office, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); *Cecilia Mamlström*, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs; *Ali Mansoor*, Chair of the GFMD 2012; *Andrew Middleton*, Director of Culture, Recreation and Migrant Statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics; *Najat Maalla M'Jid*, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; *Robert A. Mocny*, Director of US-VISIT, US Department of Homeland Security; *Imelda M. Nicolas*, Secretary of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), Office of the President of the Philippines; *Ignacio Packer*, Secretary General of the Terre des Hommes International Federation; *Kelly Ryan* (Coordinator of the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees – IGC, Geneva); *Martin Schulz*, President of the European Parliament; *David Smith*, Director of Surveys and Reporting, Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection; *Sir Peter D. Sutherland*, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Migration; *Ambassador William Lacy Swing*, Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM); *Myria Vassiliadou*, EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, European Commission; *Catherine Wiesner*, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, US Department of State.

Migration Policy Practice **welcomes submissions from policymakers worldwide. As a general rule, articles should:**

- Not exceed five pages and be written in a non-academic and reader-friendly style.
- Cover any area of migration policy but discuss, as far as possible, particular solutions, policy options or best practice relating to the themes covered.
- Provide, as often as applicable, lessons that can be replicated or adapted by relevant public administrations, or civil society, in other countries.

Articles giving account of evaluations of specific migration policies and interventions, including both evaluation findings and innovative evaluation methodologies, are particularly welcome.

To discuss any aspect of the journal, or to submit an article, please contact:

- **Solon Ardittis** (sardittis@eurasylum.org); and
- **Frank Laczko** (flaczko@iom.int)