GMDAC Briefing Series:
Towards safer migration in Africa: Migration and Data in
Northern and Western Africa

MIGRATION DATA ON THE CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE: WHAT DO WE KNOW?

IOM
UN MIGRATION

GMDAC
IOM's Global Migration
Data Analysis Centre

Cover Image © Olivia Headon / International Organization for Migration 2015

ABOUT

GMDAC

Established in Berlin in September 2015, the International Organization for Migration's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) was set up to respond to calls for better international migration data and analysis. Data are key to inform migration governance, improve programming and promote a better public understanding of migration.

BRIEFING SERIES

The briefing series "Towards safer migration on the Central Mediterranean Route", launched by IOM's GMDAC, aims to provide accurate, comprehensive and policy-oriented information on key issues related to migration on the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR). The series is published as part of the 'Safety, Support and Solutions' programme implemented by IOM, funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). The programme's main objective is to contribute to safer and more orderly migration along the CMR, resulting in fewer deaths and less suffering along migratory routes. The programme includes activities in ten countries – Algeria, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea, Libya, Senegal, Mali, the Niger and Morocco. IOM's GMDAC aims to disseminate information products to policymakers and other stakeholders on mobility dynamics and relevant topics along the CMR, with a view to improve knowledge and understanding of these and enable actors to effectively manage emerging migration trends for the benefit of countries and migrants. Issues in this series will be published throughout the programme period.

UKaid
from the British people

CONTENT
Elisa Mosler Vidal

LAYOUT DESIGN AND DATA VISUALIZATION
Roberta Aita

Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Taubenstr. 20–22 D 10117 Berlin, Germany
Tel.: +49 30 278 778 22 Fax: +49 30 278 778 99

Please visit the GMDAC website for publications, resources, and events: http://gmdac.iom.int.

- While migration topics in Northern and Western Africa are in the political spotlight, relevant data on migration remain scarce.

- Data to monitor the migration-related commitments of the SDGs are not widely available in countries across Northern and Western Africa.

- Overall, the design, monitoring and evaluation of evidence-based migration policies in the region are constrained by data availability.

- There is an urgent need to improve data on migration in Northern and Western African countries, including by enhancing migration data to monitor the SDGs and improving disaggregation of relevant data.

INTRODUCTION

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes significant references to migration. First, migration is woven into several targets in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in areas as diverse as labour migration (8.7; 8.8), human trafficking (5.2; 8.8; 16.2), student mobility (4.b) and others. Second, migration is a cross-cutting theme across the SDGs, which can have an impact on the achievement of a range of different SDG targets and is therefore central to effectively implementing the 2030 Agenda as a whole (Foresti and Hagen-Zanker, 2018).

Meanwhile, migration from Africa to Europe, particularly along the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR)[1], has come into sharp political focus in the last years. This has meant that while governments of countries on the route, mostly in Northern and Western Africa, are seeking to make the SDGs a reality for their populations, they have simultaneously been searching for effective ways to address migration issues. In fact, the 2030 Agenda is highly relevant to addressing migration topics in the region. For example, SDG targets touch on many migration topics especially relevant to countries in Northern and Western Africa, such as child trafficking, exploitation, migrant labour rights and migration governance more generally. In addition, the 2030 Agenda's centrepiece to "leave no one behind" serves as an urgent call to action to include migrants in development initiatives, which could help migrant populations across the region.

To make progress towards the SDGs and its migration-related targets in the region, a strong evidence base is necessary. To date, however, data on migration in Northern and Western Africa are scarce and information to monitor the migration commitments of the SDGs are not widely available in the region.[2] Quality data are necessary to create informed and sustainable development and migration policies in the region (IOM, 2017), and currently the design, monitoring and evaluation of such policies are constrained by data availability.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to improve data on migration in Northern and Western African countries, in particular along the CMR. This entails, among other efforts, enhancing data across migration topics to monitor SDG targets and improving disaggregation of relevant data by basic characteristics, such as sex, age and migratory status.

---

[1] The CMR covers migratory routes from Africa to Europe via the Central Mediterranean crossing. To date, this has come to signify mostly migration from Sub-Saharan Africa towards Italy, though it can also mean migration starting from other regions, such as South Asia or North Africa, and that towards Malta.

[2] Note that quality migration data are also lacking in many other countries and parts of the world. This policy brief will focus on countries in Western and Northern Africa (UN regional classification), given these are the regions of focus of the CMR project. These countries are: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan (Northern Africa); Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo (Western Africa).

Migration data on the Central Mediterranean Route: What do we know?

3

Adding welcome impetus, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, adopted by 153 UN Member States in December 2018, also highlights the importance of migration data. Its first objective is to "Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies" and many other objectives are directly relevant to migration issues in the CMR, and Northern and Western Africa more generally. As all objectives will require some data to be implemented as well as monitored, the Global Compact for Migration squarely underlines the basic need to improve migration data around the world.

This policy brief focuses on 22 countries in Western and Northern Africa, discussing their migration data challenges and opportunities. The brief also suggests concrete ways forward to improve the availability and use of migration data in order to bring about safer migration in the region.

1. NATIONAL MIGRATION DATA

National statistical systems in most countries collect some information on migrant stocks and flows and other aspects of migration, mainly through national population censuses and household surveys. These statistics are vital to understand basic migration realities. However, they can be outdated; for 17 per cent of countries in Africa the most recent data available from censuses referred to years prior to 2005. Across the continent, more than a third of countries do not have data on the country of birth or citizenship of migrants, and only 40 per cent can provide data on the age of migrants.[3] While Northern and Western African countries use different systems and methodologies to collect migration data, information on total numbers of foreign-born individuals living in each country is regularly compiled and published by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), based on national statistics, mainly from population censuses. Several countries have made steps towards improving migration data through; see Box 1.

Box 1: Survey data for migration

Conducting specialized migration surveys or adding migration questions to existing household surveys can help increase capacity to collect migration information. The Gambia conducted a Migration and Urbanisation Survey Report in 2009, the second migration survey to be conducted in the country. This provided information and analysis on internal migration movements across the country, including on migrants' socioeconomic characteristics, the main drivers of their movement, their future internal and international migration intentions, and more. The Mediterranean Household International Migration Survey (MED-HIMS) project aimed to provide detailed information on migration, and detailed surveys were carried out in 2013 in Egypt and in 2014 in Jordan.

Accurate data on migration flows, or how many migrants are entering and leaving a particular country over a set time period, are more difficult to come by. UN DESA collates information at the global level on migration flows, however, this data is only available for 45 countries globally, none of which are in Africa. Various countries in the region do collect data that could be used to measure migration flows, for example administrative records on entry or exit at border posts. While valuable, these data are often not complete or public and, as countries use different definitions and concepts to measure flows, largely not directly comparable. Some data about migration out of the region is accessible from other countries' or regions' data systems. For example, from the flow data UN DESA holds for 45 countries, it is possible to disaggregate by place of birth, citizenship and/or previous residence to ascertain how many migrants from individual African countries are entering those countries.

National administrative data systems collect some migration-relevant information, such as through work permits and visas. These data are important though often inaccurate as coverage of relevant data collection tools can be low. For example, in Sierra Leone internal labour migration is vastly under-reported and while individuals migrating for employment are expected to register with the Ministry of Employment, they rarely do (IOM, forthcoming). Administrative data also tend to be under-used; they are often scattered across different ministries and agencies in a country and are difficult to compare, integrate or use to produce migration-relevant statistics.

---

3   Note migration data varies across countries. See Juran and Snow, 2017 and Costanzo, 2014.

Governments also collect data relevant to SDG monitoring. This includes data for migration-relevant indicators; see Box 2.
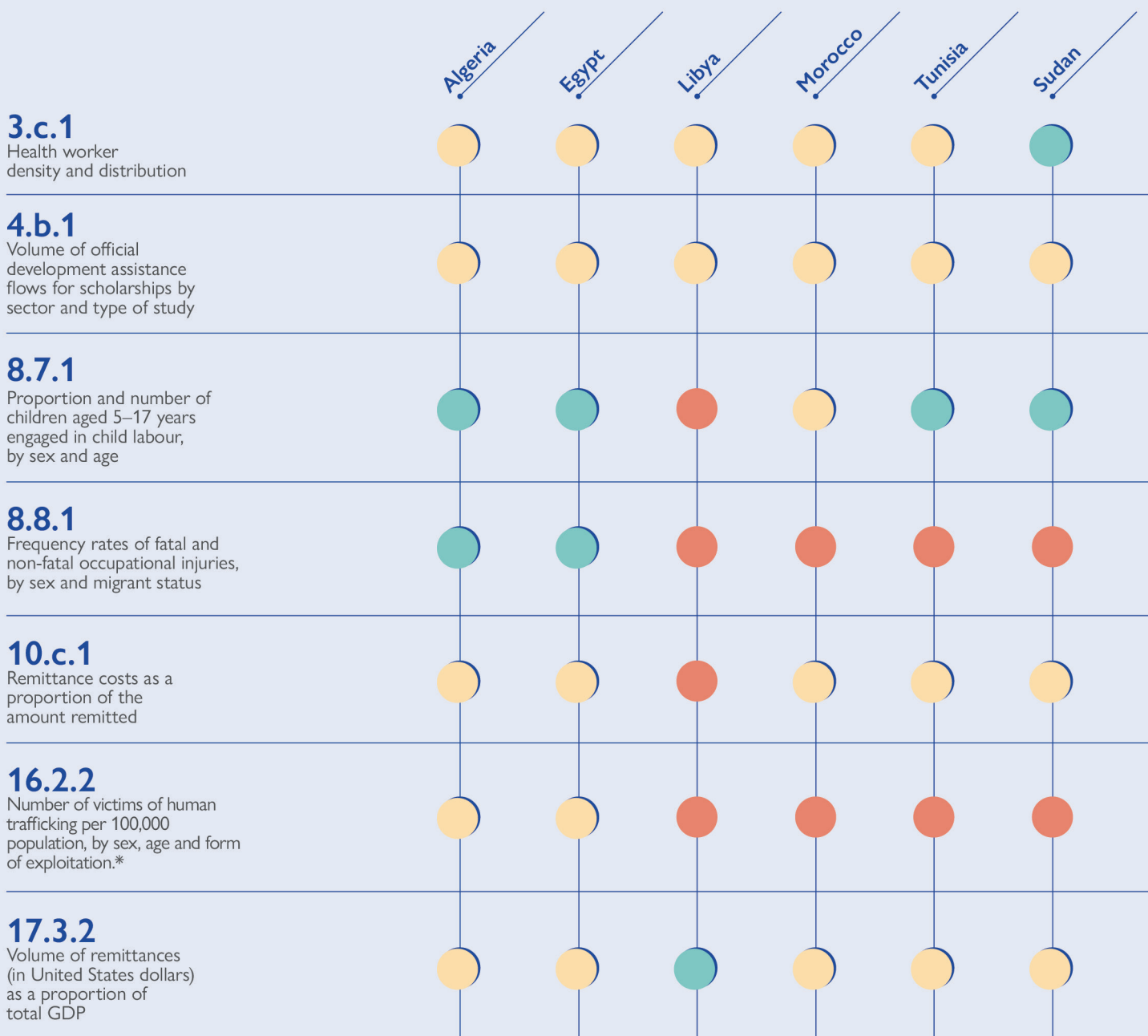
Box 2: Monitoring progress towards migration-related SDGs

The SDGs contain 169 targets and over 230 indicators to monitor progress against these. The responsibility to report on these indicators using national-level data lies with national governments. This can be challenging, especially across Africa where approximately six out of every ten SDG indicators cannot be tracked due to severe data limitations (African Union et al., 2017). On top of this, global indicators corresponding to the migration-related targets are imperfect and data collection in relation to these can be especially problematic, due to unclear methodologies and low data availability (IOM, 2018b). Therefore, while monitoring progress on the SDGs is already a challenge for most countries, monitoring migration-related indicators is especially difficult. As a result, few countries report on these fully – particularly across Africa.

Table 1 provides an overview of data availability for monitoring of migration-related SDG indicators in countries in Northern and Western Africa. It shows that overall such SDG data are patchy in the region. While there are data available from the last three years for just over half of the indicators across the countries, no data at all are available for just under a third. Certain indicators and countries see higher levels of reporting than others. For example, very few countries report on occupational injuries by migratory status and on human trafficking, while all report on student mobility. Some countries have low availability of data on all indicators. Further, available data can be outdated; only three out of the 22 countries use data on child labour rates from within the past three years. This reflects the varying capacities of countries in the region to produce statistics on internationally relevant migration topics and shows comparability of monitoring mechanisms is low.

Migration data on the Central Mediterranean Route: What do we know?

5

Table 1-2: Data availability for migration-related SDG indicators in Northern and Western African countries[4]

1. DATA AVAILABILITY FOR MIGRATION-RELATED SDG INDICATORS IN NORTHERN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Indicator	Algeria	Egypt	Libya	Morocco	Tunisia	Sudan
3.c.1 Health worker density and distribution	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	before 2016
4.b.1 Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016
8.7.1 Proportion and number of children aged 5–17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age	before 2016	before 2016	No data	from 2016	before 2016	before 2016
8.8.1 Frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status	before 2016	before 2016	No data	No data	No data	No data
10.c.1 Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted	from 2016	from 2016	No data	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016
16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation.*	from 2016	from 2016	No data	No data	No data	No data
17.3.2 Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total GDP	from 2016	from 2016	before 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016

*Formulated as "Age and sex distribution of detected victims of trafficking in persons (%)"

Green indicates data from within three years are available to report on that indicator, yellow indicates only data from over three years ago are available, and red indicates no data are available. The year presented is the latest year data are available for.
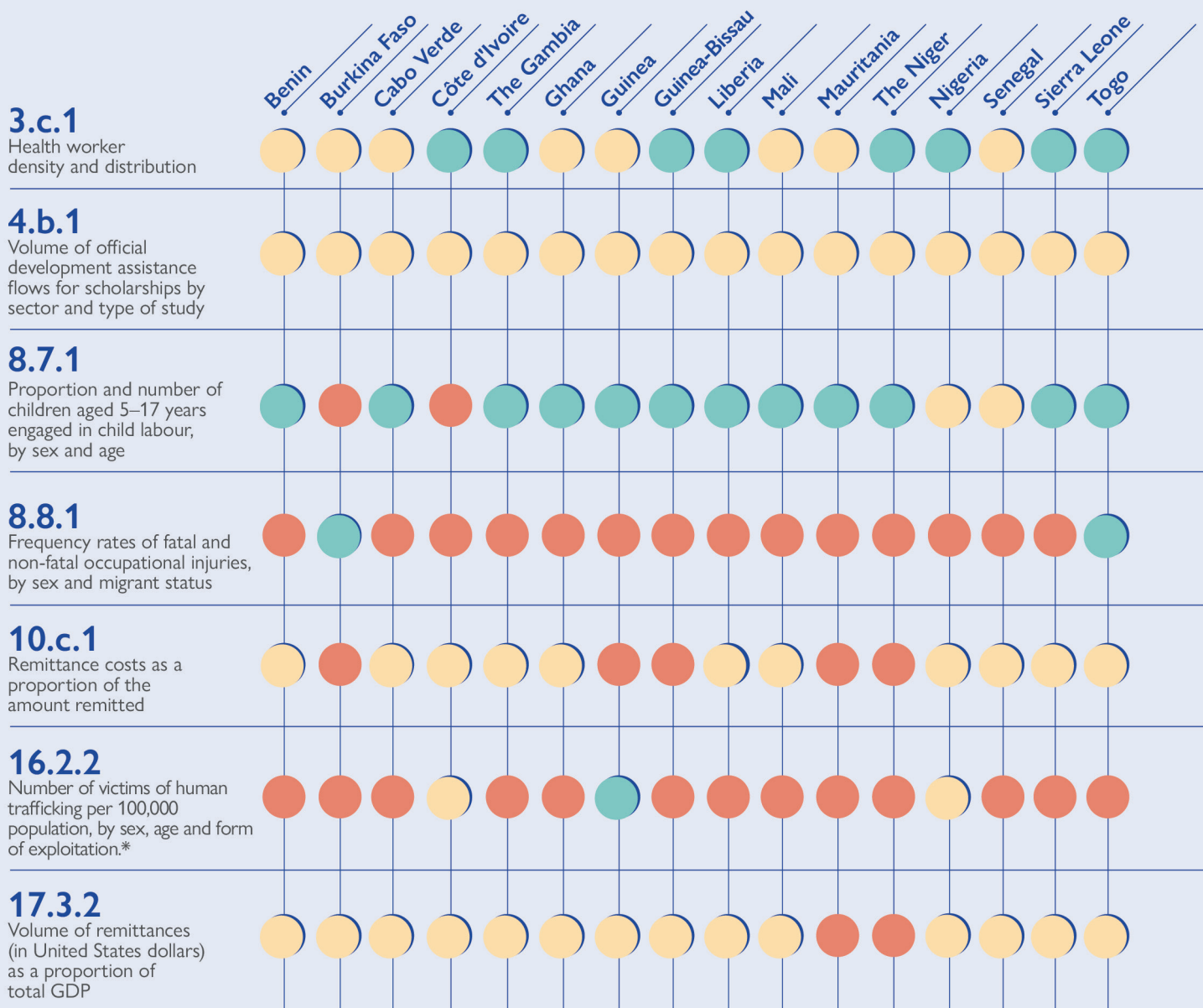
● before 2016   ◐ from 2016   ● No data

Source: UN DESA, *Global SDG Database*, 2019.

© IOM's GMDAC 2019

---

[4] Not all migration-related indicators are featured; only indicators for which data are available on the dissemination platform of the Global SDG Indicators database. Some migration-related indicators are not featured in the database at all (8.8.2, 10.7.1, 10.7.2 and 17.18.1), mainly due to imperfect indicator methodologies. It is also possible that some countries report on these indicators separately on national reporting platforms.

3.c.1 — Health worker density and distribution

4.b.1 — Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study

8.7.1 — Proportion and number of children aged 5–17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age

8.8.1 — Frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status

10.c.1 — Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted

16.2.2 — Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation.*

17.3.2 — Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total GDP

Indicator	Benin	Burkina Faso	Cabo Verde	Côte d'Ivoire	The Gambia	Ghana	Guinea	Guinea-Bissau	Liberia	Mali	Mauritania	The Niger	Nigeria	Senegal	Sierra Leone	Togo
3.c.1	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	before 2016	before 2016	from 2016	from 2016	before 2016	before 2016	from 2016	from 2016	before 2016	before 2016	from 2016	before 2016	before 2016
4.b.1	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016
8.7.1	before 2016	No data	before 2016	No data	before 2016	before 2016	before 2016	before 2016	before 2016	before 2016	before 2016	before 2016	from 2016	from 2016	before 2016	before 2016
8.8.1	No data	before 2016	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	before 2016
10.c.1	from 2016	No data	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	No data	No data	from 2016	No data	No data	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016
16.2.2	No data	No data	No data	from 2016	No data	No data	before 2016	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	from 2016	No data	No data	No data
17.3.2	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	No data	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016	from 2016

Green indicates data from within three years are available to report on that indicator, yellow indicates only data from over three years ago are available, and red indicates no data are available. The year presented is the latest year data are available for.

● before 2016   ○ from 2016   ● No data

Source: UN DESA, *Global SDG Database,* 2019.

© IOM's GMDAC 2019

Aside from national indicator reporting, there are various efforts in place in the region to track the SDGs, including several in-depth stocktaking reports. However, many of these do not include migration as a key consideration. The overall insufficiency of migration data means also that the links between migration trends in the region and development are not well understood. Therefore, while the SDGs provide important momentum and a concrete framework towards improving migration data at the country level, the effects of this have yet to be seen in many countries.

2. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DATA

Migration-relevant statistics are also available at the regional and international levels. Some regional bodies such as the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) and the Mixed Migration Hub (MHub) provide valuable information and research. At the international level, organizations such as UN DESA, UNHCR, UNESCO, ILO, IDMC and many others collect information on stocks and flows of migrants, refugees, foreign students, migrant workers, internally displaced populations and more. Further, there has been significant collaboration between these bodies on migration data and research. For example, in 2017 the African Union Commission (AUC), ILO, IOM and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) jointly produced the Report on Labour Migration Statistics in Africa in 2015.

Meanwhile, IOM collects data on topics including missing migrants, human trafficking and assisted voluntary return and reintegration. IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) collects data on population movements at key transit points in countries in Western, Central and Northern Africa, such as Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Guinea, Libya, Malawi, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan and South Sudan. Through its regular updates and reports, DTM can be a key source of timely information on migration and mobility patterns in the region. Further, DTM tools are sometimes used to collect data on migrants' profiles and vulnerabilities along migratory routes, including on the CMR and upon arrival in destination countries. For example, since 2015 the DTM tool has included questions on instances of exploitation and abuse, including human trafficking, in some surveys it conducts on major migration routes, such as the CMR, and has produced reports based on this. IOM's human trafficking case data can be found on IOM's Global Human Trafficking Database, which is the largest global database with primary data on victims of trafficking. Part of these data are anonymized and publicly available on the Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC). The CTDC is the first global data hub on human trafficking and largest of its kind, with data contributed by counter-trafficking organizations from around the world on more than 90,000 individual cases of human trafficking.[5] An anonymized version of this data set is publicly available to download.

Migration profiles have become key information tools on migration in many countries. These are analyses of available data on some or all migration-relevant aspects in a country, prepared in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders. More than 100 profiles have been developed around the world. To date, profiles in Northern and Western Africa are available for Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. Profiles analyse migration patterns and their impact on development, and identify strategies to address data gaps. Profiles are also tools to improve data capacities: by bringing diverse migration-relevant stakeholders together through a Technical Working Group or equivalent, they can improve coordination on migration issues and information at the national level (IOM, 2018c). The Global Compact for Migration encourages states to "[d]evelop and use country-specific migration profiles… in order to develop evidence-based migration policies," and these will continue to be a key tool. In Northern and Western Africa, countries with profiles can use existing dedicated structures to continue a national dialogue on migration data and promote the integration of migration topics into national development strategies and use of data for migration policy.

3. GAPS AND CHALLENGES

Many countries in Africa operate in a challenging statistical environment. The World Bank's Statistical Capacity Indicator (SCI) provides country scores from 0 to 100, assessing statistical methodologies, data sources, and periodicity of statistics. A score of 100 indicates that a country meets all criteria.[6] See Figure 1; for countries in Northern and Western Africa, the scores are very variable and often low. These range from 29.4 to 90, with an average of 66.2. While these scores are not on migration statistics specifically, they reveal the broader context of National Statistics Offices (NSOs) operating in these countries. NSOs are often under-funded and face significant resource constraints. For example, only 56 of the 102 countries with statistical plans have adequate financing to implement these, and this is worse in sub-Saharan Africa and LDCs, where half of the plans are not funded (UNDESA, 2018).
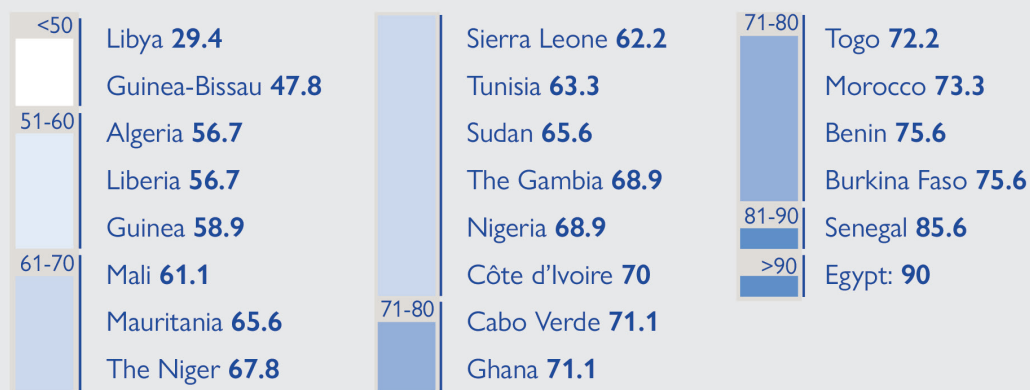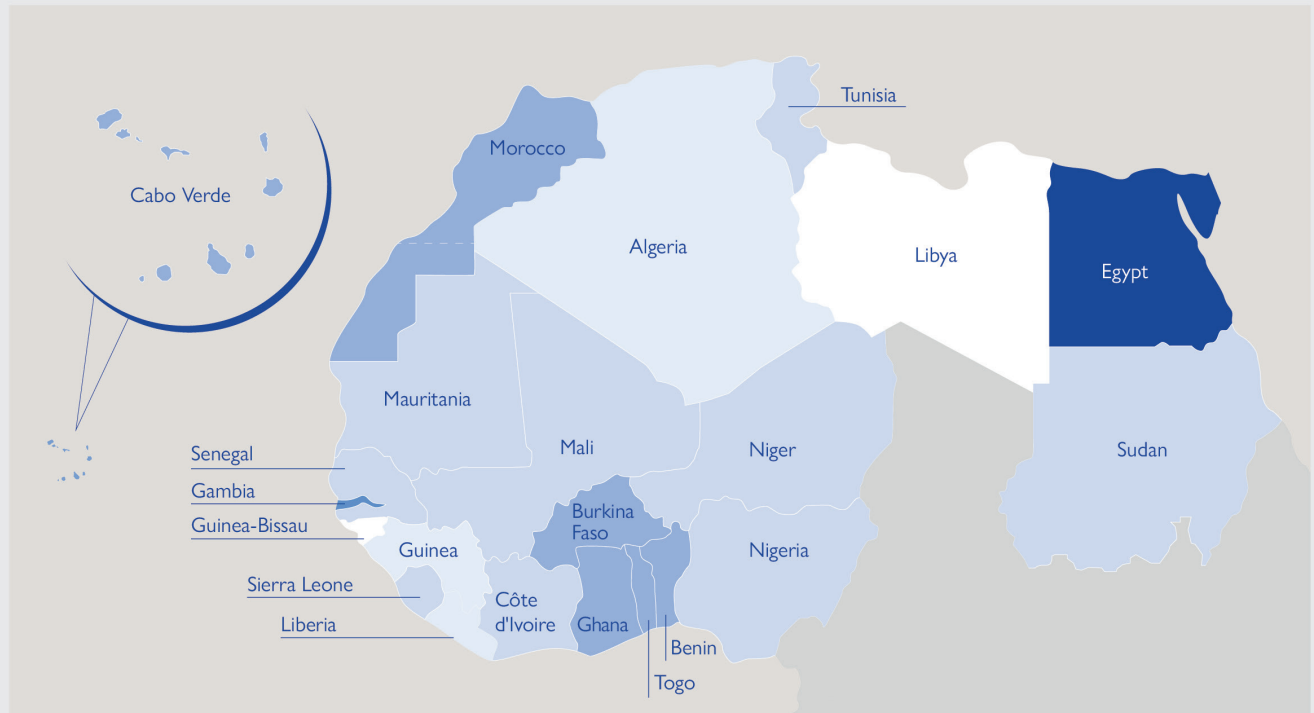
---

[5]   Last accessed on 11 July 2019.
[6]   For each dimension, a country is scored against specific criteria, using information Available at the World Bank, IMF, UN, UNESCO, and WHO. A composite score for each dimension and an overall score combining all three dimensions are derived for each country on a scale of 0-100. A score of 100 indicates that the country meets all the criteria. See http://datatopics.worldbank.org/statisticalcapacity/files/Note.pdf.

Figure 1: Statistical capacity in countries in Northern and Western Africa, 2018

STATISTICAL CAPACITY INDICATOR (SCI) SCORES IN NORTHERN AND WESTERN AFRICA

<50		
	Libya **29.4**	
	Guinea-Bissau **47.8**	
51-60		
	Algeria **56.7**	
	Liberia **56.7**	
	Guinea **58.9**	
61-70		
	Mali **61.1**	
	Mauritania **65.6**	
	The Niger **67.8**	

Sierra Leone **62.2**
Tunisia **63.3**
Sudan **65.6**
The Gambia **68.9**
Nigeria **68.9**
Côte d'Ivoire **70**
Cabo Verde **71.1**

71-80
Ghana **71.1**

71-80
Togo **72.2**
Morocco **73.3**
Benin **75.6**
Burkina Faso **75.6**

81-90
Senegal **85.6**

>90
Egypt: **90**

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

Source: http://datatopics.worldbank.org/statisticalcapacity/SCIdashboard.aspx.

© IOM's GMDAC 2019

There are significant data gaps in migration topics in Northern and Western Africa. As noted above, data on migrant flows are highly imperfect. Similarly, data on emigration can be scarce; only in some cases, such as the National Population and Housing Censuses in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau, have questions on emigration been included in censuses. Certain subregions have specific issues. For example, in the ECOWAS region neither censuses nor surveys adequately capture population movements policymakers are most interested in, namely labour migration, irregular migration and temporary cross-border movements (IOM, 2011). Many data gaps are common across countries in the region, for example on labour migration, diaspora and migration related to the environment and climate change.

Migration data on the Central Mediterranean Route: What do we know?

9

Data on children on the move are particularly challenging to collect. Many children are in transit along the CMR, often finding themselves in vulnerable situations during their journeys. For example, children may lack access to basic services, be subject to different types of abuse, and/or fall victim to trafficking, particularly if unaccompanied. However, data on children on the move in relevant countries are scarce. Relevant data collection can be patchy and unreliable, and data are often not disaggregated by basic characteristics such as sex and age (UNICEF et al., 2018). For instance, only around 56 per cent of refugee data around the world have information on age,[7] and only 57 per cent of African countries have age-disaggregated migrant stock data. On the CMR in particular, there is very little information on certain migration phenomena affecting children. For example, evidence from some countries in West Africa points to child trafficking to religious schools, but it is difficult to find comprehensive data or analysis on this. Better data are needed to inform policy responses, from provision of shelter, healthcare and education, to assisted voluntary return, reintegration and assistance of child trafficking victims.

Data on migrant vulnerabilities, disappearances and deaths are also difficult to collect. Information on migrant fatalities during migration is highly scattered and incomplete. Reliable data from official sources are lacking; no country currently publishes data on fatalities disaggregated by migratory status and the majority of coroners, medical examiners and other authorities dealing with post-mortem processing and identification do not distinguish between migrants and non-migrants. As a result, very few authorities produce estimates of migrant disappearances. The nature of irregular migration also makes data collection on vulnerabilities, disappearances and deaths difficult. As irregular routes often traverse remote regions, these both pose higher risks to migrants and make exploitation, abuse, disappearance or death more likely, and simultaneously make data collection harder. Because the majority of deaths during migration occur when migrants travel irregularly, only a small portion of total deaths are counted. Finally, actors often use different definitions of "migrant deaths" for their estimates. These challenges combined mean that numbers of migrant deaths and disappearances are best understood as minimum estimates (IOM, 2019b). IOM's Missing Migrants Project is the only open-access database on migrant deaths and disappearances worldwide.

Some migration data management issues are common in countries in Northern and Western Africa. For example, much existing data collected are unavailable or under-utilized, in particular those from administrative sources. National practices and terminology may often differ from UN recommendations, hampering international comparability. This is also an issue at the regional level: capacities for collecting, producing and disseminating migration data differ across countries and data are collected based on different definitions or methodologies (IOM, 2018a; IOM, 2019a). There are further common issues related to data sharing and dissemination. Very often data are not collated or disseminated effectively at national or regional levels, and public reporting of data can be infrequent. Further, there tends to be weak coordination and little data sharing between producers of migration-relevant statistics, such as ministries and NSOs, and end-users, such as policymakers and researchers.

4.   MIGRATION DATA CAPACITY-BUILDING

Demand for migration data capacity-building is growing as a result of increased data needs for monitoring of migration-related SDGs and implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact for Migration. In response to this, various organizations undertake activities to strengthen countries' abilities to collect, analyse and report accurate and timely migration data. Popular migration data capacity-building activities are the development of technical guidance such as guidelines or handbooks, specialized training workshops, and knowledge-sharing events. For example, IOM has led migration data workshops and provided assistance developing Migration Profiles in Ghana, Zambia, Namibia and various other African countries. Many other actors are also involved migration data capacity-building in the region, such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and UNDESA. Two related IOM efforts in the region are worth noting:

- A set of regional guidelines on migration data were produced by IOM under the umbrella of the EU- and ECOWAS-funded project Support to Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa (FMM West Africa). "Guidelines for the harmonisation of migration data management in the ECOWAS region" acts as a data collection manual and includes a training kit to harmonize national practices in migration data across the region and bring these in line with international norms. This maps available data sources and contains detailed guidelines on collecting and managing data related to various population groups of interest such

---

[7]   Refugees under UNHCR mandate only. UNHCR, Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2016, 2017, UNHCR, Geneva, 2017.

as migrant children, asylum-seekers, migrant workers, students, women, refugees, diaspora members and IDPs. By supporting a more coherent picture of human mobility in the region, the guidelines work towards building a stronger evidence base on migration, and aim for migration information to be used for economic, social and development planning in the ECOWAS region.

- IOM provides ongoing support to Egypt's Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), the country's statistical agency. In April 2017, CAPMAS and IOM launched a Migration Data Analysis Unit, which aims to conduct assessments and produce key statistics on migration issues to support evidence-based policy in Egypt, and to help produce migration data relevant to the SDGs.

Many financial commitments for statistical development are aligned to national strategies, such as a national strategy for the development of statistics (NSDS)[8] (PARIS21, 2018b). This is the case in some Northern and Western African countries. For example, Libya developed its first ever NSDS for 2018–2023. In general, linking capacity-building to other strategies, including national development plans and monitoring commitments of global processes, is linked to well-financed national statistical systems (PARIS21, 2018c). This means that a key capacity-building opportunity is including migration data into other government plans and strategies for the first time.

Several countries have recently developed national migration policies, many of which include data strategies. Nigeria, Ghana, and Liberia have adopted these, and other countries are following (IOM and ICMPD, 2015). Embedding data considerations into national migration governance can systematically improve the quality, timeliness and availability of data, as well as boost political buy-in and mobilise resources. Including migration data into regional migration governance strategies can be effective; the regional consultative process on migration in West Africa, the Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA), has a specialised technical working group on data. Strengthening national or regional migration governance structures can also improve migration data. For example, fully implementing the Free Movement provisions of the ECOWAS Protocol (1979), especially on Residence and Right of Establishment, would enable related institutional administrative systems to become stronger sources of migration data.

The surge in migration data capacity-building initiatives is mirrored at the global level as attention to data capacity-building is slowly growing. International support to statistics increased to $623m in 2016 from $591m, with the greatest portion of this (28%) going to support for demographic and social statistics (PARIS21, 2018b). While the share of Official development assistance (ODA) dedicated to statistics was only 0.33 per cent in 2016, this also rose slowly since the year before (0.30% in 2015) and the donor pool supporting statistics has been expanding and diversifying. This presents an opportunity to refine approaches to data capacity-building and improve efforts to measure their impact. While it is a challenge to effectively monitor implementation and sustainability of capacity-building efforts (IOM, 2019a; PARIS21 2018a), the increased interest in these also means there is opportunity now to more seriously evaluate these, including in the migration area.

Box 3: Innovative data collection

> There are some attempts to use innovative data collection and management methods to better understand human mobility in countries in Northern and Western Africa. New data sources, including from mobile phone call records or social media activity, can offer opportunities to identify mobility trends in a timely fashion and can thus generate valuable new insights if harnessed responsibly and ethically. A project managed by Flowminder attempted to better understand mobility patterns in 15 West African countries to support efforts to control the Ebola outbreak by analysing existing data from national census microdata samples, mobile phone call detail records (CDRs) and spatial population data (Wesolowski et al., 2014). While much work is needed to refine methodologies and address privacy and security issues surrounding use of innovative data sources before regular and large-scale use, such projects can contribute to monitor mobility dynamics and provide data on the needs of hard-to-reach migrant populations, which can be critical in contexts of humanitarian crises.

---

[8]   National statistical systems in fragile situations also made progress improving statistical capacities; Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and Libya were key recipients of statistical capacity-building efforts recently (Paris21 2018b).

CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

There is a clear and urgent need to improve the evidence base around migration in Northern and Western Africa and along the CMR, to better monitor SDG commitments, support the immediate needs of migrants and formulate sensible long-term development and migration policies. Data collected are highly imperfect, and there are key data gaps and issues with data management. Without more accurate, reliable and timely data on migration, policy measures to implement the SDGs and address migration issues in Northern and Western Africa will be limited in their effectiveness. In the CMR, the case for increased regional migration data sharing is especially strong. A route-based approach that involves all countries along migrant trajectories is needed to fully understand fast-changing migration dynamics and migrant vulnerabilities. The following recommendations are put forward to improve migration data at the national level and across these regions:

- **Strengthen capacities to conduct policy-relevant analysis of existing data in countries on the CMR.** While data gaps are significant, IOM's capacity-building experience in countries in the region is showing that more migration-relevant data are available than are currently regularly analysed and disseminated. Limited human and financial capacities to analyse data and lack of coordination across entities collecting relevant data within a country hamper data use for policy. Data capacity-building efforts should not only focus on the collection of data but on the processing and analysis of data that are already available. This could be done by harnessing expertise already present in these regions, for instance from research centres and academia.

- **Leverage the use of administrative records** to produce migration-related statistics Most migration-relevant data in countries on the CMR come from population censuses and – to a lesser extent – household surveys. While administrative records (e.g. from visa applications, residence permits and border control) are not originally collected for statistical purposes and can be incomplete and unreliable, more could be done to exploit these sources to measure migratory flows. At a minimum, the international community should focus on promoting a dialogue around migration statistics in a country involving line ministries and entities responsible for the collection of administrative data.

- **Promote partnerships with the private sector and the research community to explore use of innovative data sources,** such as mobile phones and social media. Some countries in the region have already started experimenting with new data sources, for instance in the development and health sectors, and more efforts in this direction to understand mobility patterns should be encouraged.

- **Disaggregate data by migratory status in all standardized data collection tools across the CMR.** To do this, engage actors outside of NSOs that also relate to migration data, such as labour, health and education, education ministries, to disaggregate their statistics by basic characteristics such as sex and age, as well as migratory status, following international guidance on this.

- **Plan targeted action to address specific data gaps, based on countries' policy priorities.** For example, design detailed actionable plans to improve data on specific topics of interest related to migration along the CMR, such as migrant and displaced children, and mobilise resources towards these.

- **Improve data for migration-relevant SDG indicators in the region, and disaggregate others by migratory status.** Priority should be given to indicators that are most relevant to the country's national development context and strategy and to those for which data could be available by easily adapting national data collection systems.

- **Develop or refresh migration profiles.** Develop profiles for countries that do not yet have one in the region, or refresh these if necessary. Migration profiles are useful exercises to promote coordination between different entities at the national level and could contribute to the design of a migration data strategy and action plan, with priorities on how to improve data in the medium to long term. Profiles are also helpful to mainstream migration data into other government plans and strategies, which could consist, for instance, in including migration in a country's NDSS or add data considerations to a National Migration Policy.

- **Focus on migration data capacity-building that is demand-driven and builds on existing data structures.** Steps could include taking stock of data needs relating to migration on the CMR through consultations, before carrying out tailored workshops. Migration data capacity-building efforts should be linked to other data capacity-building activities related to SDG monitoring.

- **Boost regional efforts to improve migration data collection and management.** This could mean harmonizing methodologies and practices between national data systems via relevant African regional guidelines, establishing regional migration observatories, or strengthening the role of relevant regional bodies and processes.

Migration data on the Central Mediterranean Route: What do we know?

13

BIBLIOGRAPHY

African Union, Economic Commission for Africa; African Development Bank and United Nations Development Programme

2017   Africa Sustainable Development Report: Tracking Progress on Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa. Available at www.uneca.org/publications/2017-africa-sustainable-development-report.

Costanzo, J.

2014   Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa Draft Report 2014 – Migration Data Collection and Management in West Africa: Assessment and Recommendations. FMM West Africa, Abuja.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

2011   Migration Profiles: Making the Most of the Process. International Organization for Migration. Available at http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/migrationprofileguide2012_1oct2012.pdf.

2017   African migration to Europe: How can adequate data help improve evidence-based policymaking and reduce possible misconceptions? International Organization for Migration. Available at https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/gmdac_data_briefing_series_issue_11.pdf.

2018a   Guidelines for the Harmonization of Migration Data Management in the ECOWAS Region . International Organization for Migration. Available at https://migrationdataportal.org/tool/guidelines-harmonization-migration-data-management-ecowas-region.

2018b   Migration and the 2030 Agenda: A Guide for Practitioners. International Organization for Migration. Available at https://publications.iom.int/books/migration-and-2030-agenda-guide-practitioners.

2018c   Migration Profiles: A useful tool for understanding and improving governance of migration. International Organization for Migration. Available at https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/07-migration_profiles_final_new.pdf.

2019a   Building Migration Data Capacity: Examples of Good Practices for the African Region (forthcoming). International Organization for Migration. Available at https://publications.iom.int/books/central-mediterranean-route-thematic-report-series-building-migration-data-examples-good.

2019b   Fatal Journeys Volume 4: Missing Migrant Children. International Organization for Migration. Available at https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/fatal_journeys_4.pdf.

Forthcoming   Migration Profile – Sierra Leone. International Organization for Migration.

Juran, S. and R. Snow

2017   The potential of the 2010 population and housing census round for international migration analysis. *Migration Policy Practice*, 7(1):6-8. Available at www.eurasylum.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/MPP-29-1.pdf.

Foresti, M and J. Hagen-Zanker

2018   Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Available at https://www.odi.org/publications/10913-migration-and-2030-agenda-sustainable-development.

PARIS21

2018a   Measuring Statistical Capacity Development. PARIS21 Discussion Paper, No. 11, Paris. Available at http://paris21.org/paris21-discussion-and-strategy-papers.

2018b   Partner Report on Support to Statistics PRESS 2018. Available at www.paris21.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/PRESS2018_V3_PRINT_sans%20repres_OK_0.pdf.

2018c   Good Practices for Sustained Financing of National Statistics. PARIS21 Discussion Paper, No. 12, Paris. Available at http://paris21.org/paris21-discussion-and-strategy-papers.

Wesolowski, A., L. Bengtsson, C.O. Buckee, X. Lu, E. Wetter and A. J. Tatem

2014   Flowminder Foundation West Africa human mobility models: Version 1.0. Flowminder Foundation. Available at www.worldpop.org/resources/docs/ebola/Flowminder-Mobility-Data-21.08.14.pdf

UNICEF, IOM, UNHCR, EUROSTAT and OECD

2018   A call to action: Protecting children on the move starts with better data. United Nations Children's Fund. Available at https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Migration_advocacy_Feb20.pdf.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

2018   The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2018/TheSustainableDevelopmentGoalsReport2018-EN.pdf.

2019   United Nations Global SDG Database. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database.

Migration data on the Central Mediterranean Route: What do we know?

15