Distr.: General
24 October 2017

English

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Work Session on Migration Statistics
Geneva, Switzerland
30-31 October 2017
Item 7 of the provisional agenda
Asylum seekers and refugees

Forced displacement – Statistics on refugees and internally displaced persons

Note by Expert Group of Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS)

Abstract

Numbers of refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs) have increased rapidly in recent years. The number of persons displaced by conflict, violence, persecution, or human rights violations has almost doubled from 1997 to 2016. Forced displacement has gained prominence on the international agenda.

Robust statistics on refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs are critical for informed decision-making, which ultimately impacts on the lives of vulnerable populations. Data on refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs are necessary to better understand the phenomenon of forced displacement, to analyse its impacts, to measure changes over time and to provide an adequate response.
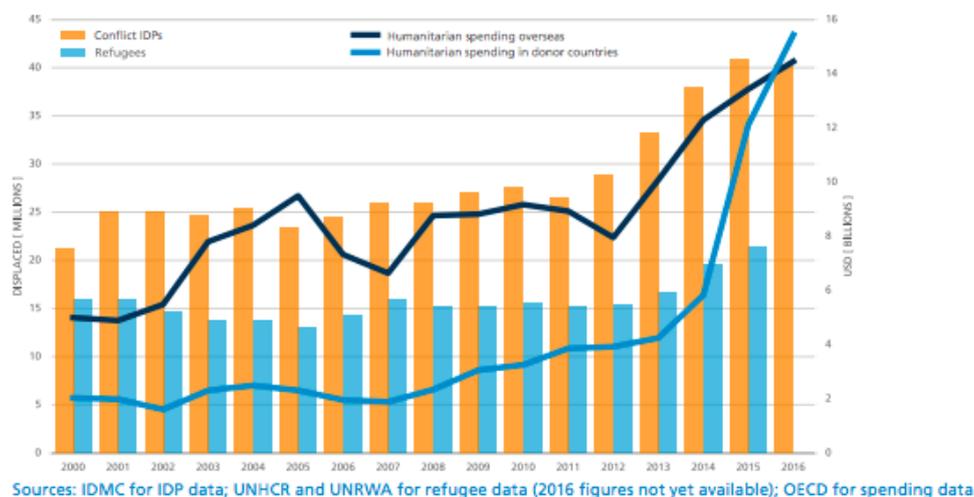
There are numerous challenges in producing quality statistics on refugees, IDPs and asylum-seekers. In addition to the capacity constraints of many countries, there are several challenges associated with the collection, compilation and presentation of statistics, which affect the quality of published statistics. For example, concepts and classifications need to be translated into core questions that will enable the identification of forcibly displaced populations in data sources in a way that is both practical and cost-effective.

> The main objective of the EGRIS project for this year is to develop international recommendations on refugee statistics and a technical report on the way forward for IDP statistics to be used by national statistical authorities and international actors alike. To fulfil this objective, cooperation between statistical, development and humanitarian actors has been needed, both from governments and their partners.

I. Why are statistics on refugees, IDPs and asylum seekers needed?

1.   Numbers of refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs) have increased rapidly in recent years. The number of persons displaced by conflict, violence, persecution, or human rights violations has almost doubled from 1997 to 2016[1], reaching nearly 66 million individuals. This estimate is, however, uncertain, due to the lack of comparable statistics of sufficient quality. Furthermore, the figures show that the largest increase has been in the number of internal displacements, and there are today almost twice as many IDPs as there are refugees. In addition, there are a large number of people displaced by disasters of various kinds. This number is hard to estimate and is not included in the 66 million persons mentioned.

Figure 1: Comparison of the number of IDPs and refugees and humanitarian spending in donor countries and overseas, 2000 to 2016

Sources: IDMC for IDP data; UNHCR and UNRWA for refugee data (2016 figures not yet available); OECD for spending data

---

[1] Estimates of the number of people displaced by conflict, violence, persecution, or human rights violations increased from 33.9 million in 1997 to 65.6 million in 2016. By the end of 2016 there were 17.2 million refugees under the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 5.3 million Palestinian refugees registered by United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), 40.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 2.8 million asylum-seekers, During 2016 alone, 10.3 million people were newly displaced by conflict, violence, persecution, or human rights violations, including 6.9 million IDPs and 3.4 million refugees and asylum-seekers.

2.   Moreover, most countries in the world are affected by forced displacement either as a source, point of transit, or host of refugees, asylum-seekers or IDPs, making forced displacement a global phenomenon. There is also an increasing number of countries affected by large movements of people, where the movements often include mixed flows of forcibly displaced persons and migrants who move for different reasons but use similar routes[2]. However, developing countries are disproportionately affected by forced displacement, and there is growing consensus that greater international cooperation is required to assist host countries and affected host communities.

3.   Forced displacement has gained prominence on the international agenda. The *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*,[3] adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on September 19, 2016, recognises the unprecedented level of human mobility and acknowledges the shared responsibility to manage large movements of refugees and migrants through international cooperation[2]. It also reaffirms the intention of Member States to realize the full potential of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* for refugees and migrants. Specifically, under the Sustainable Development Goal 10 to reduce inequality within and between countries, a key target is "to facilitate the 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 for Refugees and Migrants* explicitly recognizes the needs of refugees, IDPs and migrants in the pursuit of this target.

II.   Background

4.   With the growing prominence of forced displacement internationally, there is increasing interest at national and international levels in statistics on refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs, including complete, accurate, timely and internationally comparable estimates of the numbers of forcibly displaced persons. Estimates of conflict-induced population flows are increasingly relevant for official population statistics, which need to include forcibly displaced populations in a consistent manner. Incomplete or inadequate statistics on forcibly displaced populations undermine the estimation of population stocks, which in turn affects other statistics, particularly those that are population based.

5.   Robust statistics on refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs are also critical for informed decision-making, which ultimately impacts the lives of vulnerable populations[4]. There is a range of potential users of statistics on refugees and asylum-seekers, including local authorities, national authorities and international organisations. Data on refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs are necessary to better

---

[2] United Nations. (2016). Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 September 2016. General Assembly. New York: United Nations.
[3] The New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants is available at http://www.refworld.org/docid/57ceb74a4.html.

[4] United Nations. (2014). Report of Statistics Norway and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on statistics on refugees and internally displaced. Economic and Social Council, Statistical Commission. New York: United Nations.

understand the phenomenon of forced displacement, to analyse its impacts, to measure changes over time and to provide an adequate response. Quality statistics on forcibly displaced populations also provide the requisite evidence to support: (a) better policy formulation, sound decision-making to address the challenge of forced displacement; (b) more effective monitoring, evaluation and accountability of policies and programs; and (c) enhanced public debate and advocacy.

6.   However, existing principles and recommendations on vital statistics, population and housing censuses, and international migration statistics only address forced displacement peripherally.[5] The need to enhance the comparability of international migration statistics (including statistics on asylum-seekers and refugees) was first addressed in 1953, when the United Nations published *International Migration Statistics*. In 1976, the United Nations Statistical Commission adopted *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration* to encourage countries to collect, tabulate and disseminate statistics on international migrants and to enhance international comparability. In 1988 the recommendations were revised and expanded to include special guidelines for the compilation of statistical information on asylum-seekers. However, the recommendations do not address large movements of refugees or internally displaced persons[6].

7.   It is therefore necessary to develop a set of specific recommendations that countries and international organisations can use to improve the collection, collation, disaggregation, reporting, and overall quality of statistics on forcibly displaced populations.[7] The objective of these recommendations would be "to improve statistics on an important aspect of international migration and to improve common information about a situation with a significant impact on global welfare"[8].

8.   The *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* recognizes the importance of improved data collection, particularly by national authorities. It calls for enhanced international cooperation to improve data collection on refugees and migrants, including through capacity building for national authorities. It notes that 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, and that data collection should be consistent with national legislation on data protection and international obligations related to privacy. Additionally, it states that specific recommendations on refugee and IDP statistics can serve as a critical instrument to enhance the statistical capacity of national authorities, thereby

---

[5] Migration statistics have been discussed at several sessions of the Statistical Commission, but without a focus on forcibly displaced populations.

[6] United Nations. (2014). Report of Statistics Norway and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on statistics on refugees and internally displaced. Economic and Social Council, Statistical Commission. New York: United Nations.

[7] There is no standard definition of the 'quality' of statistics. This may encompass several criteria such as relevance, timeliness, credibility/integrity, completeness, accuracy/reliability, coherence, comparability, and/or accessibility/interpretability.

[8] United Nations. (2015). Report of Statistics Norway, the Turkish Statistical Institute, Eurostat and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on progress in the work on statistics on refugees and internally displaced. Economic and Social Council, Statistical Commission. New York: United Nations.

strengthening the evidence base for decision-making on the protection and assistance of refugees and asylum-seekers[9].

III.   The process of developing reports and recommendations

9.   At the forty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission in March 2015, Statistics Norway and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) presented a joint report on statistics on refugees and IDPs (E/CN.3/2015/9). The report highlighted several challenges associated with the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics on refugees, asylum-seekers, and IDPs, including the lack of consistent terminology, need for new data sources, and difficulties in comparing international statistics on refugees and IDPs[10]. The authors proposed: (a) the organisation of a conference on statistics on refugees and IDP statistics, which would bring together international organisations, experts from national statistical offices, and the research community; and (b) the drafting of international recommendations on statistics on refugees and IDPs, similar to the *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration Revision 1*[11]. The Commission also noted the need for a manual on statistics on refugees and IDPs, which would serve as a practical guide for the collection, analysis and dissemination of that information, taking into consideration existing methods and initiatives[12]. The Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), Statistics Norway, UNHCR, Eurostat, and the Statistical Office of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) organised an international conference on refugee statistics held in Antalya, Turkey from October 7 to 9, 2015. Participants included representatives of national statistical offices, offices dealing with the admission of foreigners and refugees, research institutions, United Nations agencies, the World Bank, and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO)[13].

10.   In its decision 47/111 following its forty-seventh session, the Statistical Commission acknowledged the urgent need to build more efficient information systems against the backdrop of a rapidly growing volume of forcibly displaced persons due to new humanitarian crises. The Statistical Commission endorsed the establishment of an expert group on refugee statistics, but suggested that the group include IDPs in its scope of work, and build on existing technical work, such as the *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1* and the *Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing*. In June 2016, a Steering Committee was established comprising Statistics Norway, UNHCR, and Eurostat. In July 2016, the EGRIS was

---

[9] United Nations. (2016). Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 September 2016. General Assembly. New York: United Nations.

[10] United Nations. (2014). Report of Statistics Norway and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on statistics on refugees and internally displaced. Economic and Social Council, Statistical Commission. New York: United Nations.

[11] United Nations. (2014). Report of Statistics Norway and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on statistics on refugees and internally displaced. Economic and Social Council, Statistical Commission. New York: United Nations.

[12] United Nations. (2015). Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics Implementation Guidelines. United Nations.

[13] UNHCR. (2015). Report of the International Conference on Refugee Statistics 7-9 October 2015, Antalya, Turkey. Antalya: UNHCR.

mandated to develop: (a) International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics (IRRS) to serve as a reference guide for national and international work concerning statistics on refugees and asylum-seekers [to be submitted in March 2018 at the 49th session of the Statistical Commission]; (b) Refugee Statistics Compilers Manual with operational instructions on how to collect statistics on refugees and asylum-seekers [to be submitted in March 2019 at the 50th session of the Statistical Commission]; and (c) a Technical Report outlining a way forward for development of comparable international standards for statistics on IDPs [to be submitted in March 2018 at the 49th session of the Statistical Commission]. EGRIS is composed of around 40 national statistical authorities, the Steering Committee and 15 international organisations.

11. The first meeting of EGRIS was held in Copenhagen in November 2016. Meeting participants reviewed the proposed structure of the IRRS and IDP Technical Report and established working groups to draft the various chapters. A second meeting of EGRIS was held in Oslo in April 2017, with the objective of further developing the structure and substance of the IRRS chapters, focusing in particular on the scope and nature of the proposed recommendations. Participants included representatives of the European Union (EU),[14] Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS), Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mediterranean Statistical Cooperation Program (MEDSTAT), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNHCR, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD), World Food Programme (WFP), World Bank, and statistical offices of Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kurdistan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Niger, Norway, Palestine, Philippines, Somalia, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom (UK), and the United States.

IV. Current state of statistics on refugees and asylum-seekers

12. Statistics on refugees and asylum-seekers are published every year by some national authorities as well as international and regional organisations such as UNHCR and Eurostat. In many countries, the collection and publication of the statistics is undertaken by UNHCR on behalf of the country, until such time as the country has the capacity to produce its own statistics. However, in addition to the capacity-building needs of many countries, there are several challenges associated

---

[14] Asylum Support Office (EASO), Eurostat, Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Directorate-General Migration and Home Affairs, Households International Migration Surveys in the Mediterranean (MED-HIMS), and Arithmus Project.

with the collection, compilation and presentation of data on refugees and asylum-seekers that affects the quality of published statistics. These challenges include:

i. Lack of comparability between statistics on refugees and asylum-seekers produced by different countries, and across displacement situations within countries. This arises due to the inconsistency[15] of terminology, concepts, definitions and classifications, as well as variation in the methods of data collection, compilation and presentation at national and international levels. Data on refugees and asylum-seekers are typically collected for administrative rather than not statistical purposes, and the definitions employed reflect country-specific legislation, policies and practices;

ii. Necessity to improve the understanding of the concepts of flows and stocks of refugees and asylum-seekers, and to build efficient information systems that can serve both administrative and official statistics needs;

iii. Measurement of forced population movements in humanitarian crises presents unique technical, operational and political challenges, affecting the accuracy and reliability of data sources. For example, refugees and asylum-seekers are highly mobile, especially in on-going humanitarian crises, and population distributions can change rapidly, which in turn affects sampling frames for surveys;

iv. Gaps in official statistics, including a lack of socio-economic data on refugees and asylum-seekers. The availability of basic socio-economic data on refugees and asylum-seeker populations would permit analysis of their social and economic well-being relative to other migrants and the general population, and their degree of integration;

v. Necessity to maximize the use of available data sources (e.g. by integrating questions on migration and refugee status into survey instruments) while at the same time developing new data sources (e.g. spatial data and big data);

vi. Limited connection between national statistics on refugees and asylum-seekers, often managed within immigration departments or national statistics on migration and population;

vii. Extreme sensitivity of refugee and asylum-seeker data and the importance of confidentiality and data protection in refugee statistics, which may limit the access of statisticians to information in administrative systems; and

viii. Significant variation across countries in terms of the size of forcibly displaced populations, the capacities of the national statistical and administrative systems, and national policy priorities. In particular,

---

[15] For example, in some countries asylum seekers are enumerated when their application is accepted and in other countries, when they arrive in the country. In some countries, data do not include the applicants' family members, who are admitted under different provisions, while other countries count the entire family. Additionally, there are country variations in how refugees are accounted for in statistical estimates of population stocks.

capacity constraints in developing countries limit the scope and effectiveness of data collection and dissemination activities.

V.   Current state of IDP statistics

13.   IDPs account for the largest share of displaced populations globally, and there is a growing recognition of the need for accurate and actionable data on IDPs to inform national response and support policy processes. However, statistics on IDPs face particular conceptual and measurement challenges, and guidance on this topic is currently scarce. Hence, there is potential to develop standards for more comparable official statistics on the topic utilizing procedures for the production of quality statistics.

14.   Of the few NSOs or NSSs that produce and publish statistics on internal displacement, notable variation in the definition of who constitutes an IDP is evident. There are a number of reasons why definitions can vary. For one, the reasons that drive IDP data collection differ from context to context. In the majority of contexts, much of the statistics collected on IDPs are gathered for operational purposes (e.g., for providing assistance), and are not defined as official statistics. Collecting statistics on IDPs for operational purposes often simplifies how IDPs are defined for a variety of reasons, for instance because a lower level of accuracy can be tolerated, or the definition includes certain more specific vulnerability criteria in order to use the statistics for the targeting of assistance.[16] In addition, operational data is often collected by different actors with various needs located in different geographical areas. This can lead to variations in the definitions and technical specifications used to target IDPs and allocate resources.

15.   Various practices for translating the definition of an IDP into a statistically measurable unit exist due to differences in officially recognised definitions, as well as different practical, technical and conceptual challenges encountered. Though statistics in many contexts depart from the comprehensive definition of IDPs established in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, important commonalities and a need for improved practice in this area exist, and developing a unified statistical framework for this population remains feasible. Doing so would help provide clarity on conceptual challenges across many contexts and allow for the comparability of data.

16.   *The normative legal and policy frameworks* for protecting IDPs serve as the basis for IDP statistics. A cornerstone among these is the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. It sets forth 30 principles that are based on international human rights law (IHRL), international humanitarian law (IHL), and refugee law by analogy.[17] They cover the broad range of IDP assistance and protection needs

---

[16] For example, limiting operational IDP statistics to only those who were displaced within a certain period of time, or demonstrate specific humanitarian needs.

[17] E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, 11 February 1998,UN Commission on Human Rights, Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Francis M. Deng, submitted pursuant to Commission resolution 1997/39. Addendum: Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,   available at: https://goo.gl/GJU2Sz

required during displacement and during return, resettlement or reintegration, in addition to covering protections against arbitrary displacement.

17.   The most significant normative advance with respect to internal displacement since the Guiding Principles is the legally binding African Union Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, known as the Kampala Convention.[18] The Guiding Principles are directly incorporated in many of the Kampala Convention's core provisions, such as the definition of IDPs. However, whereas the Guiding Principles merely reflect pre-existing norms of international human rights and IHL, the Kampala Convention moves beyond the Guiding Principles to advance international norms on internal displacement.[19] Among the advances found in the Kampala Convention is the extension of responsibilities for IDP protection beyond states to the African Union, international organisations, humanitarian agencies, civil society, and non-state actors (including armed groups). The Kampala Convention also makes explicit a range of human rights violations that can cause internal displacement, such as gender-based violence and other harmful practices or inhumane treatment.

18.   Another sign of international acceptance of the Guiding Principles has been the proposal, adoption, and implementation of numerous laws, policies and decrees addressing internal displacement in all regions of the world—either explicitly based upon or in a manner consistent with the Guiding Principles.[20]

19.   Displacement is challenging to *measure statistically*. A key challenge is to operationalize concepts that have not yet been standardised in statistical practice. Principle 9 of the UN Fundamental Principles on Official Statistics[21] says that the use "of international concepts, classifications and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels." In other words, it is important that technical documentation and metadata are in place to ensure transparency of what is measured or included in the statistics produced and disseminated.

20.   Displacement-related figures and statistics are most commonly produced as "stocks" or "flows." A stock is a static measure, which aims to capture how many people meet certain criteria in a given country or location at a particular point in time, also called a reference date. An IDP stock therefore refers to the total number of individuals that match an established definition of internally displaced in a determined location and at a specific moment in time. A person belongs to this population when she or he meets the defined criteria at a precise reference date, regardless of when he or she acquired said characteristics. Hence, the total number of IDPs at any given time is described as the stock.

---

[18] Adopted by the African Union (AU) Heads of State Special Summit in Kampala, Uganda, on 23 October 2009, and entered into force on 6 December 2012, and as of 15 June 2017 signed by 40 countries and ratified by 27 countries. Available at: https://goo.gl/BrdqYX

[19] Asplet M. and Bradley M., "Strengthened Protection for Internally Displaced Persons in Africa: the Kampala Convention comes into force", 6 December 2012. Available at: https://goo.gl/FTY6kD

[20] See the IDP law and policy database at http://www.internal-displacement.org/law-and-policy. Examples include Uganda's "National policy for internally displaced persons, 2004", Kenya's "Prevention, Protection and Assistance to IDPs and Affected Communities Act, 2012" and Yemen's "National Policy for Addressing Internal Displacement, 2013".

[21] https://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/fundprinciples.aspx

21.   In contrast, a flow is a dynamic measure. It captures how many people meet certain criteria within a particular time period (as opposed to a specific reference date), and whose status as a member of the population in question changes as a result. Flows have a directional component: they can be counted as inflows (persons entering the population of interest) and outflows (persons leaving the population of interest). The difference between inflows and outflows is called a net-flow, and this can have a positive (more inflows than outflows) or negative value (less inflows than outflows). A clear example of a flow is the number of new IDPs identified between two specific dates following a displacement event (e.g. the event that triggered the displacement, such as an earthquake, flash flood, or a violent attack).

22.   *Data* need to be of sufficient quality in order to be used as a basis for decision-making. The international statistical community has therefore developed a framework for quality statistics, namely the *United Nations 10 Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics*. This framework, or a similar one,[22] should be employed in the production of all official statistics.

23.   In addition to establishing standards via quality frameworks, implementing statistical acts at the national level is key when it comes to sound data production and effective corresponding legislation and practice. Specifications around the rights and obligations of the bodies that comprise the National Statistical Systems (NSSs), the scope of NSSs, and the procedures utilized for developing, producing, and disseminating official statistics are typically laid out in these acts. Such specifications are imperative when it comes to data quality. The rights and safeguards provided to data respondents (particularly as they concern respondent confidentiality)[23] are also critical elements typically incorporated into statistical acts. Additionally, many guidelines[24] and tools exist for assessing and measuring the quality of data collected and disseminated. These guidelines should also be followed when processing and disseminating official statistics on IDPs.

24.   For statistics to be useful, data on displaced persons or groups also need to be aligned, interoperable and of sufficient quality to be used as a basis for decision-making. This, however, requires a clear understanding of the displacement phenomenon in each context and the suitability of the tools for official statistics production. Different tools can be used for different purposes and each include some specific caveats that must be properly understood. The appropriateness of such methods and models will have a critical impact on the quality of the data, the prevention of avoidable mistakes and consequently of badly planned assistance measures or duplication of efforts.

25.   Determining whether a person is or is not internally displaced is an important first step of collecting quality IDP statistics. Collecting data on *characteristics* of

---

[22] A few examples: European Statistics Code of Practice (adopted in 2011); http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/quality/european-statistics-code-of-practice, African Charter on Statistics (adopted in 2009); https://www.au.int/web/en/treaties/african-charter-statistics , Code of good practice in statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean (Adopted in 2011); http://repositorio.cepal.org/handle/11362/16423, ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS) Code of Practice (Adapted in 2012); http://www.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/images/resources/Statistics/2014/Code%20of%20Practice-ADOPTED-CLEAN.pdf

[23] A generic law for official statistics has been developed by the UN for reference https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/publications/2016/ECECESSTAT20163_web.pdf

[24] Many handbooks, guidelines and training manuals can be found here: https://unstats.un.org/Unsd/demographic/standmeth/handbooks/default.htm

IDPs is thus an important part of this process, as characteristics have strong capacity to differentiate between those who do and do not meet certain criteria. In addition to the core identifying characteristics, they also enable identification of when displacement began and can capture different aspects that are important for understanding progress and the attainment of durable solutions. Characteristics can also illuminate the socio-economic situation of IDPs, thereby informing appropriate operational and policy response. Lastly, they offer means of comparing conditions between IDPs, other potentially vulnerable groups and the general population of the country.

26.   The characteristics that determine if durable solutions are achieved are outlined in the IASC Framework. The Framework defines the end of displacement as a time when IDPs no longer have any displacement-related needs and can pursue their human rights without discrimination related to their displacement; it also offers a set of eight criteria that can be used to determine and measure progress towards this. Yet in practice, operationalizing these eight criteria in statistical terms and concretely measuring if and when a durable solution has been achieved is complicated. There is an on-going need to better measure progress towards durable solutions in order to inform policies and programming. Understanding which characteristics and related indicators are best suited to assess durable solutions is thus important.

27.   Collecting data on characteristics of IDPs is critical to ensure appropriate assistance and other operational response, as well as implications for policy-making. This includes capturing information on groups or individuals who meet a certain, well-defined set of characteristics, as well as changes and evolutions in the latter. Capturing such information should also allow for comparative analyses between the various subgroups and their specific traits and needs.

28.   This exercise should also include the analysis of progress made towards the achievement of durable solutions, which can also be linked to many of the SDGs. The definition of durable solutions in relation to displacement presents many challenges, in particular when trying to define the end of displacement.

29.   The production of official statistics requires effective *coordination*. Without coordination, data collection efforts can be duplicated, sometimes resulting in the existence of competing data and diverging results due to the use of incompatible specifications and measurements. Hence, effective coordination mechanisms are required to align quality standards and regulate methodologies acceptable for official statistics, to ensure best use of resources, and to disseminate statistics on IDPs for all relevant users and the general public.

30.   Coordination efforts are most effective when cooperation occurs between stakeholders and technical partners at the national level. Coordination at the national level—which includes statistics coordinated through efforts within the NSS and in collaboration with external actors as relevant—helps to produce harmonised statistics that can inform coherent national response and policy development. Effective national coordination is also a prerequisite for international coordination. International coordination—i.e., reporting and collating IDP statistics at the international level—is important because it can improve national and global IDP statistics through exchanges of experiences and tools, and improved capacities overall.

31.   Many different types of coordination mechanisms exist at the national level, differing in their mandate, composition and organisation. They also differ in how influential they are. The international coordination of IDP statistics today is limited, and current practice shows little comparability of statistics on IDPs internationally. Similar to challenges observed at the national level, the way the international community defines and measures internal displacement internationally is not aligned.

32.   Some initiatives do nevertheless exist, and several international organisations are committed to working with countries to enhance the production of quality statistics on internal displacement. The EGRIS established by the UNSC is an example of an initiative to strengthen IDP statistics, and this report has taken stock of the current state of IDP statistics, and highlighted the need to align definitions, concepts and use of indicators.

VI.   Recommendations under development: Refugees

33.   The recommended statistical definitions of the refugee population in scope, and the relevant stocks and flows have been developed. Issues resolved in the IRRS include the difference between migrants and refugees and the principle that, while recognizing that there is much overlap that can be used when producing statistics, refugees are not simply a subset of migrants and, in some cases, may not even be migrants at all.

34.   Additionally, the concepts of the population in need of international protection, persons with a refugee background and persons returning from abroad after seeking international protection have been developed to describe the different populations in the scope of the recommendations.

35.   The minimum set of classificatory variables, basic statistics and key indicators to be collected and reported on the different population groups have been defined in the report.

36.   The concepts and classifications on refugees and asylum-seekers need to be translated into core questions that will enable the identification of the refugee-related populations in data sources in a way that is both practical and cost effective. Because of the complexity of the legal definitions of the refugee-related populations, simplification is needed to arrive at a workable sequence of questions in surveys and censuses.

37.   Indicators derived from general household and labour force surveys can only be used for refugee-related populations when the data can be disaggregated by refugee status, and where the sample size and design is adequate to yield meaningful results for refugees. Alternatively, in some contexts, refugees can be identified through a process of data matching; the techniques required to do this should be developed and tested.

38.   Recommendations have also been made on integrating survey and census data with administrative data and how record linkage may be carried out using both country administrative data and register data from UNHCR and UNRWA, and the need to build an integrated data infrastructure.

39.   In order to assess the well-being and integration of refugees, it is important to establish benchmark populations within the host country who can be compared with the refugee population. The characteristics of the total population can then be used to measure the well-being of the refugee population relative to other residents in the host country. This requires surveys and censuses that include both refugees and the host population.

40.   Similarly, measuring the characteristics of migrants in the host country provides information about how refugees may be different from other migrants. Migrant and refugee well-being and integration may sometimes be measured using the same indicators. However, the process of integration can be quite different for refugees. It is important to standardize indicators of well-being and integration so that they are internationally comparable and allow an assessment of the success of integration efforts across regions and countries. One of the indicators that is unique to the refugee population is residence in a refugee camp. Residence in a camp is a core indicator, but many household surveys omit camps in their coverage. The information needed for refugee indicators will involve the extension of the scope of many survey sampling frames to cover camp and institutional buildings housing refugees and asylum-seekers, in addition to the usual residential dwellings. It is also recommended that surveys include refugee camps in their sampling frames and that censuses ensure that refugee camps are enumerated.

41.   The recommendations list recommended indicators for measuring wellbeing and integration, linked with the CRRF and the SDG indicators. These indicators are classified by the dimension measured and whether they are recommended as core or non-core and the SDG equivalence for each category is identified.

42.   Coordination across the system of national statistics spanning different statistical agencies is essential. Although there are differences between centralized and decentralized statistical systems, the overall aim of any system is to produce a comprehensive set of integrated statistics (through common definitions, common concepts, and harmonized nomenclatures and classifications) and to do so the NSO, or primary statistics agency responsible, must have a clear coordinating role. It is recommended that the NSO or primary statistical authority maintains overall responsibility for the integrity and validity of all official statistics and coordinates the process ensuring effective planning, coordination and dissemination.

43.   It is imperative that the appropriate legal framework is in place at the national level. These laws should uphold the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and can also include census laws, laws and regulations covering administrative data and civil registration and vital events, and ensure collaboration and data sharing within the statistical system and beyond.

44.   Recommendations are also made with respect to metadata standards, data sharing and data dissemination for refugee statistics. Methods of evaluating the statistical system and quality assurance for refugee statistics are also recommended. Regional organisations, such as the UN regional commissions or the EU make recommendations on statistics, which can be either mandatory or advisory, with the objective of increasing the comparability and quality of statistics produced by their member states. Some of these regional organisations produce and disseminate statistics on refugees, based on data collected from their member states and have an important coordinating role

45.   Efforts should be made to engage ministers and senior politicians at the international and regional levels to elevate refugee statistics as a priority for political and government agendas.

46.   Improved coordination is also required in the international system and it is recommended that an appropriate governance body be established to ensure the harmonization of concepts, definitions and report on refugee statistics, ensuring that Member States are included in these deliberations. A model, which could be followed, is that of the UN Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation.

VII.   Recommendations towards a statistical framework on IDPs

47.   The forthcoming technical report on IDPs primarily takes stock of the existing statistics on IDPs. In addition, it makes recommendations towards a framework for IDP statistics. This is done with the intention of paving the way for the production of comparable, quality statistics on these populations across different contexts in the future.

48.   When data are collected, the data quality needs to follow international standards as outlined, for example, in the *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics*. This includes following an agreed-upon statistical framework and definitions, generating proper documentation of how data have been collected and processed, ensuring confidentiality of all respondents, and establishing a dissemination plan (which should include information on how the data will be made available to the public). Furthermore, the purpose of collecting data on IDPs needs to always be clear. Responsible parties should assess if the data is absolutely necessary to obtain and how frequently updates should occur prior to implementing collection.

49.   For the purpose of statistical measurement, IDPs are people who were forced or obliged to flee from their place of usual residence due to a causal event, and are currently living within their country of usual residence. Causal events have to be in line with the letter and spirit of the Guiding Principles. Events include, although are not limited to: armed conflict, generalised violence, disasters, human rights violations, and natural and manmade disasters. Thus, reasons such as economic deprivation do not constitute a reason for a person to be included in IDP statistics.

50.   Collecting migration data should be a standard practice in all countries. Such data should be able to be disaggregated by the reason(s) for migration so that it is possible to assess whether or not the movement was forced. The movement should occur as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of a causing event. In some cases, family members of IDPs may stay behind at the initial event of displacement, but then follow the IDPs afterwards. In this case, they should also be included in the statistical category of IDPs.

51.   In order to ensure a strong link between IDP statistics and their use for national policy-making, IDP statistics should be included into national strategies for development of statistics (NSDSs) and yearly statistical plans. Inclusion of IDP statistics into NSDSs and NSSs will help mainstream the production of IDP statistics and enhance the availability of comparative data. Furthermore, including IDP statistics in NSS mandates will facilitate adherence to international statistical quality

standards, even when the primary focal point for data production is not a statistical agency.

52.   National governments have the responsibility to organise statistical production and provide capacity for it through human resources, training, and funding. The international community should, however, support the development of quality statistics on displacement. The intention is to establish participatory and transparent processes that build on best practices for the production of statistics, and further to establish cooperation between displacement-affected countries and international organisations, as well as between countries facing similar challenges.

VIII.   The way forward

53.   After the finalisation of International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics (IRRS) and the Technical Report on IDP Statistics the aim is to produce:

  i.   A Refugee Statistics Compilers' Manual, with operational instructions on the implementation of the International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics, to be adopted by the UN Statistical Commission in 2020 and implemented by national statistical authorities as well as relevant regional and international organisations.

  ii.   Refined Recommendations and a Compilers' Manual with a set of Internationally Comparable Standards on IDP Statistics, to be adopted by the UN Statistical Commission in 2020 and implemented by national statistical authorities as well as relevant regional and international organisations.

  iii. A training strategy and related implementation plan, containing concrete capacity-building activities for the implementation of the Refugee and IDP Compilers' Manuals by end-users.

54.   The main goal of the EGRIS project is to develop international recommendations on refugee and IDP statistics to be used by national statistical authorities and international actors alike. As part of these recommendations, internationally comparable indicators will be developed, which will improve the quality and comparability of national and international statistics to provide a basis for evidence-based decision-making and planning on different levels. The Refugee and IDP Statistics Compilers Manuals will entail concrete operational instructions for the end-users - the national statistical authorities - thereby advancing data collection and analysis capacity at national levels.

55.   Another focus of the deliverables is on data dissemination. Making national statistics available to the general public is an important element for ensuring accountability and transparency. Furthermore, shared knowledge provides a basis for awareness and advocacy. Accordingly, the Recommendations and the Compilers Manuals will specifically address this issue and will provide examples of best practices that can be used by the end-users to adopt similar practices.

56.   All these elements contribute to sustainable development by providing the foundation for evidence-based policies and programs that can improve the livelihoods of specific vulnerable population groups (see SDG 10). Especially, involving international and national experts and organisations, including the end-

users, in the development of these recommendations and guidelines is very much in line with the idea of creating strong partnerships for sustainable development (see SDG 17) and will ensure that the end-users' needs are met. This process also helps to raise awareness about the importance of data for sustainable development and encourages national authorities to take charge of the disaggregated collection and dissemination of data related to asylum-seekers, refugees, and IDPs. Through concrete training activities, statistical capacity will be built on national and international levels (see SDG 16 and 17).

57.   While the development of the recommendations and guidelines is a one-time process, the implementation by national statistical authorities will be on-going. The deliverables aim to provide internationally adopted guidelines that all countries can refer to and which they can adapt to their specific situations and needs. The provided indicators can be integrated and adapted to their existing systems and the Compilers Manuals offer support for the implementation in various settings.

58.   Capacity-building is a core element to focus on as this will ensure that current as well as future statistical officers are able to produce statistics that meet minimum quality requirements and can be shared with relevant stakeholders and the public. UNHCR, JIPS, as well as the other consortium members have on-going programs and collaborations in many end-user countries and will continuously invest in capacity-building of national partners. The statistics community are also potential providers of support, including UNSD, regional commissions and NSOs such as Statistics Norway. While organisations such as UNHCR and JIPS are connected to refugee and IDP networks, UNSD, regional commissions and Statistics Norway have contacts and support mechanisms towards NSOs also involving other government actors working in the production of statistics. Generating improved refugee and IDP statistics is very much in line with the interests of all collaborating organisations within the consortium, as high-quality data are the basis for developing appropriate strategies within their mandate. Therefore, further activities to ensure the implementation of the guidelines can be expected.

59.   The IRRS and technical report will be submitted to the UNSC in March 2019 and are meant to be shared with and implemented by all UN Member States. However, not all countries might have the resources and capacity to fully implement the recommendations immediately, and proper capacity-building as well as the adoption into national policies and programs takes time. The aim is to involve as many interested countries as possible, but in order to be able to give support as needed, a phased approach will be taken, implying that only few countries will be chosen for initial implementation with concrete guidance and support. We will work closely with relevant partners in this, building on existing efforts to enhance capacity.

60.   In the first phase, a project team aims at implementation of the recommendations and operational instructions in member countries of the consortium, which explicitly expressed their support for the EGRIS work. These include national statistical authorities in some low- and lower-middle income countries. In a second phase, the members of the wider EGRIS group are expected to implement the outcomes of their work. However, in the long run the project aims to roll-out the implementation of the recommendations and operational instructions to countries globally.

61. Through concrete recommendations and guidance, both the Compilers' Manuals and the Recommendations will aim to strengthen national capacity in countries hosting asylum-seekers, refugees, and IDPs in collecting and disseminating high-quality statistics on these populations, with specific focus on its relevance in low- and middle-income countries.

———————