African Union

STATAFRIC

Your Source to African Statistics

GUIDELINES

ON MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT STATISTICS

SCB Statistics Sweden

THE WORLD BANK

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List of Acronyms

AMO	African Migration Observatory
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AUC	African Union Commission
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EGRISS	Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics
EU	European Union
IC-TIP	International Classification for Administrative Data on Trafficking in Persons
IDAC	International Data Alliance for Children on the Move
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILMSQ	International Labour Migration Statistics Questionnaire
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRIS	International Recommendations on Internally Displaced Persons Statistics
IROSS	International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics
IRRS	International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics
JLMP	Joint Labour Migration Program for Africa
MPFA	Migration Policy Framework for Africa
MS	Member State
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizsation
NSO	National Statistical Office
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
REC	Regional Economic Community
SHaSA	Strategy for the Harmonisation of Statistics in Africa
STATAFRIC	African Union Institute for Statistics
STG	Specialised Technical Group
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSC	United Nations Statistical Commission
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division

Acknowledgements

On behalf of STATAFRIC, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all partners, experts, national and regional institutions, as well as the technical staff who actively contributed to the development of these **Guidelines on Migration and Displacement Statistics.**

Your commitment, insightful contributions and availability throughout the process reflect the spirit of collaboration and convergence that drives our African statistical community in addressing migration-related challenges. Thanks to your collective efforts, we were able to design a harmonised, relevant and context-sensitive tool aimed at strengthening the collection, analysis and dissemination of reliable, comparable and accessible data on migration and displacement. This work directly supports the modernisation of national statistical systems and enhances our understanding of migration dynamics across Africa.

I would like to extend special thanks to the Regional Economic Communities, National Statistical Institutes, thematic experts, as well as technical and financial partners for their continued support and renewed confidence in STATAFRIC.

This collective endeavour reflects our shared ambition: by 2063, to make Africa a united, prosperous and peaceful global powerhouse, driven by its own citizens and playing a dynamic role on the international stage. Through the consolidation of migration and displacement data, we are contributing to strengthening statistical governance across the continent and informing public policies that promote a more inclusive, resilient and forward-looking Africa.

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Contributors

The document was prepared by a team led by Dr Jose Awong Alene, Ag. Head, Statistics System Coordination & Innovation STATAFRIC. Also, at the level of STATAFRIC, Mr Adoum Gagoloum, Head of the Economic Statistics Division and Officer in charge of STATAFRIC, provided strategic guidance throughout the implementation process of this document.

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The team undertook wide-ranging consultations with stakeholders and African experts at all stages of the drafting process, from conceptualisation to preparation of the final draft.

Substantial input and advice have been provided by the regional migration statisticians Mr Mohamed H. Abdullahi (COMESA), Mr Silvère Arnaud Dagbédè Houenou (ECOWAS), Mr Charles Ogolla (IGAD) and Ms Priscilla Ndayara (EAC). Further, valuable insights were provided by Ms Kenza Aggad (IOM), Mr Stephen Ngugi (STATAFRIC), Mr Rabii Sakhi (AMU), Mr Joel Nkegna (ECCAS), Mr Brian Onsase Okengo (AUC), Ms Nadia Touihri (ILO); Ms Natalia Krynsky BAAL (EGRISS) and Mr Filip Mitrovic (EGRISS).

The consultations also included thorough reviews during two meetings (November 2024 and May 2025) of the Sub-Group on Migration Statistics of the Specialized Technical Group on Demography, Migrations, Health, Human Development, Social Protection and Gender (STG8). The representatives in the STG from national statistical offices in African countries contributed greatly to the content and validation of these guidelines.

A write-shop was organised in July 2025 to review the inclusion of the comments from the latest STG meeting, with a focus on incorporating real situation examples from Member States in the document. The technical team conducting this task was made up of Ms Priscilla Ndayara (EAC), Mr Silvère Arnaud Dagbédè Houenou (ECOWAS), Mr Mulbah Kromah (Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services) and Mr Alinoor Hussein Hapicha (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics).

Furthermore, representatives of UNSD, ILO, EGRISS, and IOM have been providing vital suggestions in their respective areas of expertise. IOM's contribution drew on technical experts from the Special Liaison Office and three Regional Offices in Africa—East, Horn and Southern Africa; West and Central Africa; and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)—ensuring that the guidelines reflect diverse regional perspectives.

Foreword

The second Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA 2) is the Continental Strategy for the Development of Statistics in Africa. This statistics development strategy is designed to support the implementation of wider continental development strategies, most notably the AU's Agenda 2063, the AfDB's High Five Transformational Agenda for Africa and Agenda 2030, as well as national and regional development plans.

The Strategy for the Harmonisation of Statistics in Africa aims to improve statistical coordination and collaboration among all actors in the statistical system on the continent and is the fruit of the collective efforts of the four Pan-African organizations – African Union Commission (AUC), UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and African Development Bank (AfDB). The main objective of the strategy is to enable the African Statistical System to generate timely, reliable, and harmonized statistical information on the following dimensions of sustainable development: (i) environmental, (ii) social, (iii) economic, and (iv) cultural and political.

The strategic objective 1.3 of SHaSA 2 aims to harmonize the standards and methods of statistical production. This objective seeks to adapt international norms and methods to African realities. The harmonization of these norms and methods will foster increased availability of harmonized statistical data, in support of the integration and development programs, and will contribute to the application of international norms and methods to the specificities of African countries.

Migration and displacement represent prominent phenomena in Africa which underscore the importance of robust statistics on these issues for evidence-based policies. At the global level, new statistical recommendations on international migration and temporary mobility, refugees, internally displaced persons and statelessness have become recently available.

The development of continental guidelines aims to adapt these international norms to African realities. Their overall objective is to establish a methodological approach that harmonizes data collection, incorporating best practices and a minimum set of indicators. These guidelines will support AU Member States in harmonizing institutional frameworks, metadata, publication, and dissemination practices, ultimately improving the quality and comparability of migration and displacement statistics across the continent.

It is expected that these guidelines will enhance the quality of statistics in Member States, supporting better informed policies and regional integration.

Executive Summary

These migration statistics guidelines provide a harmonised framework to support African Union Member States and Regional Economic Communities in the production of reliable, comparable and policy-relevant data. They align with the priorities of the African Union, Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees. This document is also aligned with the global UN Recommendations, ensuring consistency with international standards and best practices.

The document highlights persistent challenges in data comparability due to heterogeneous definitions and methodologies. It presents international efforts to standardise key concepts while integrating African specificities through STATAFRIC's inclusive and pragmatic approach.

Special attention is given to clarifying core concepts, often overlapping, such as migrant stocks and flows, refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless populations and temporary populations, to improve the quality and coherence of migration statistics.

The guidelines propose essential indicators tailored to African realities and encourage disaggregation by age, sex, country of birth and citizenship to enhance analytical depth and inclusivity.

They also detail the main data sources, including censuses, surveys, registers and other administrative records, highlighting their complementarities and limitations, particularly regarding coverage, frequency and analytical capacity.

The document further addresses methodological aspects, national and regional data systems, policy-relevant data needs, data integration, privacy, security and dissemination. It concludes with a presentation of STATAFRIC's strategic support to Member States through capacity building, data exchange and the establishment of national technical working groups.

This framework aims to consolidate a robust, inclusive and sustainable continental architecture for the production and use of migration and forced displacement statistics in support of governance, development and African integration.

Rationale for Harmonisation Guidelines

CHAPTER

1

These guidelines for the continental harmonisation of migration statistics represent an initiative contributing towards the implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA & SHaSA 2), with the aim of enabling the African Statistical System to generate quality, timely and harmonised data covering all the aspects of inclusive and sustainable development and supporting integration goals and policies.

Focused on migration and displacement statistics, these guidelines correspond directly to Strategic objective 3, under Strategic theme 1 on producing quality statistics, on harmonising standards and methods of statistical production and adapting international standards and methods to African realities. They will also address relevant issues in migration and displacement statistics related to Strategic theme 2 on coordination mechanisms for the production of quality statistics, as well as defining the statistical priorities for the implementation of the integration and development agendas, and Strategic theme 3 focused on building Sustainable Institutional Capacity in the African Statistical System to be able to produce and disseminate the harmonised statistics needed for the development and integration process. They will also include recommendations related to Strategic theme 4 on quality policy and decision-making, focusing on enhancing evidence-based decisions and policies through the use of statistics on migration and improving the communication of statistical information.

The guidelines are intended to assist in the development of capacity in migration and displacement data collection and management in African countries, as well as to address issues related to capacity building for the implementation of these guidelines. Improved capacity, in turn, will contribute to increased development and adoption of evidence-based migration policies.

The guidelines are envisioned for use by statisticians in national statistical offices and other governmental departments at regional and continental levels. Their use can be further extended to a wide range of stakeholders at a national and regional level. They provide an overview of resources for collecting, processing and disseminating migration, displacement and mobility data, in order to address key migration and displacement challenges. The guidelines aim to give practical examples to support producers and users of data and statistics, as well as help identify possible data quality improvements and the types of data needed to respond to policy actions.

Policy Context for Harmonisation. Review of AU Main Policy Frameworks (For More Details, see Appendix/Links)

The methods and activities proposed to strengthen the harmonisation of migration and displacement data build on the goals of the existing policy frameworks in Africa.

These guidelines aim to contribute to the implementation of the themes and objectives of SHaSA, in the domains of migration, displacement and mobility statistics. These themes and objectives include: improving comparability of statistics, increasing the use of harmonised standards and methods of statistical production, strengthening inter-institutional cooperation, empowering the institutions themselves, developing statistical capacity and developing an appropriate data management infrastructure.

The revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA), together with its Action Plan (2018–2030), emphasises the role of migration data in mainstreaming migration into policy and planning frameworks and development initiatives. It highlights the lack of reliable sex-disaggregated migration data as an obstacle to migration management and cooperation, and underscores the critical challenge of the continuous need for systematic and comprehensive migration data gathering, analysis and exchange within and between African States. It addresses different components of effective migration information systems, including related technology investments and capacities. It highlights the need for compatible definitions of migrant categories, stressing the need for comparable data, including harmonised definitions of migration variables and data collection methods. It further stresses the importance of capacity building, particularly based on SDG17.18 on enhancing capacity building support to developing countries to significantly increase the availability of high quality, timely and reliable disaggregated data.

The MPFA calls for the development of migration profiles to inform evidence-based policy development, as well as the harmonisation of the collection of migration data, including definitions of migration variables (such as those in the revised Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility), data collection tools, methods, intervals, etc., at continental and regional levels so that data are comparable across countries and regions.

In addition, these guidelines also align to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the global framework for the SDGs. As a cross-cutting issue, migration is relevant across several goals of the 2030 Agenda—both where it is explicitly mentioned and where it is addressed indirectly through indicators related to health, education, decent work, inequality, climate and others.

The guidelines also align with the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), and with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). Both frameworks emphasise improvements in national statistics to address the broader objectives. In

its Objective 1, the GCM focuses on the collection and utilisation of accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies, and the relevant commitments in that regard, particularly through stating the following enumerated actions, including:

A. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for improving migration data on the local, national, regional and global levels with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, under the guidance of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations, by harmonising methodologies for data collection and strengthening the analysis and dissemination of migration-related data and indicators;

B. Improve international comparability and compatibility of migration statistics and national data systems;

C. Develop a global programme to build and enhance national capacities in data collection, analysis and dissemination in order to share data, address data gaps and assess key migration trends, which encourages collaboration between relevant stakeholders at all levels, provides dedicated training, financial support and technical assistance, and leverages new data sources, including big data;(d)

D. Collect, analyse and use data on the effects and benefits of migration as well as the contributions of migrants and diaspora to sustainable development.

While Objective 1 of the GCM explicitly emphasises the importance of collecting and using accurate and disaggregated data, migration data are relevant across all 23 objectives. Robust data are essential for informing evidence-based policy and programming in areas such as border management, migrant protection, labour mobility, as well as return and reintegration.

Equally, GCR focuses on the importance of reliable, comparable, and timely data for evidence-based measures and responses. GCR promotes the development of harmonized or interoperable standards for the collection, analysis, and sharing of age, gender, disability, and diversity disaggregated data on refugees and returnees and hots community[1].

The guidelines further pursue the AU's vision on the enhancement and harmonisation of continental migration statistics, including the vision expressed through the decisions of the Assembly in 2020 endorsing the statutes establishing the specialised continental bodies dealing with migration data, statistics and knowledge: in particular the Statute of the African Migration Observatory (AMO) in Rabat, Morocco, as well as the Statutes of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Migration (ACSRM) in Bamako, Mali, and the Continental Operational Centre For Combating Irregular Migration.

These guidelines also aim to harmonise with the main African and international frameworks and legal instruments on migration and displacement. (A summary of other key AU continental policies, legal instruments and policy frameworks, as well as international frameworks, which provide a broader context for the development and implementation of the migration and displacement data and harmonisation guidelines, is presented in Appendix 1.)

These include, for example:

- OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee problems in Africa
- African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention)
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and its Protocol[2] Relating to the Specific Aspects of the Right to a Nationality and the Eradication of Statelessness in Africa

1 GCR- Global Compact on Refugees – booklet | UNHCR- Section 3.3.

2 Protocol has not entered into force

- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- Constitutive Act of the African Union
- Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community and its Protocol[3] Related to the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment
- Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area
- Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018–2030)
- AU Agenda 2063 and the Second Ten Year Implementation Plan (2024–2033)
- African Charter of Statistics
- Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA 1) and Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa 2017–2026 (SHaSA 2)
- 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol
- 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons
- Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
- Global Compact on Refugees
- United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the global framework for the SDGs

Internationally, in the realm of migration and displacement statistics, recent years have seen the development and endorsement by the UN Statistical Commission of several key frameworks. These include the International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics (IRRS, 2018), International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS, 2020), International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS, 2023) and Recommendations on International Migration and Temporary Mobility Statistics (2025). These key frameworks, globally approved including by AU Member States, provide a key foundation for the current guidelines which aim to regionalise these critical international frameworks for application in the African continent.

Situational Analysis

The status of data collection, processing and dissemination of migration and displacement statistics across Africa varies in terms of timeliness, coverage and quality.

At the time of developing these guidelines, several Member States were already collecting migration data at a national level through population censuses, administrative sources and the inclusion of migration modules in general surveys. However, only a limited number of countries had implemented dedicated migration-specific surveys.

Working in parallel, three RECs, namely ECOWAS, IGAD and EAC, have collected and published migration and displacement statistics through various reports. ECOWAS publishes an annual migration statistics report. The EAC and IGAD have published up to the second edition of their respective migration and displacement statistics reports. The AUC through STATAFRIC administers a joint questionnaire with the ILO that collects labour migration statistics as well as statistics on the total population by country of birth and country of citizenship, as well as remittances. The data obtained from the AU ILO Joint questionnaire are used to publish the labour migration statistics report in Africa, which was on its third edition at the time these guidelines were developed. Although much effort has been put into harmonising the production of migration and displacement statistics within the RECs and on the continent, significant gaps exist in the production of the said statistics.

Perhaps the most significant source of migrant stock statistics on the continent is the population and housing census (PHC). As a result, an assessment of the migration statistics collection through the PHCs is of importance in this guideline. The 2020 round of PHCs was implemented over the period 2015–2024. Results from the third UNSD global survey on the 2020 round of population and housing censuses,

3 Protocol on free movement of persons has not entered into force

released in March 2025, reveal that 25 countries in Africa had conducted a census in the 2020 round, representing 45% of all Member States. 35 AU Member States responded to the survey. Of the migration topics recommended for inclusion in the PHCs, 19 countries on the continent included place of usual residence, 21 included country of citizenship and 20 included place of birth. Limited information exists on whether these topics were analysed to produce migration reports in the Member States after their respective PHCs.

This situation sheds light on the need to develop the present guidelines to further harmonise the production of migration and displacement statistics.

Migration and Displacement Recommendations and Frameworks

CHAPTER

2

The comparability of international migration and displacement statistics faces challenges in regard to data quality, inconsistency and erratic frequency of data collection, as well as disparities in terminology usage. This lack of harmonisation arises in part due to variations in migration and displacement data definitions and standards across and within countries.

To address this issue, the UNSD, ILO, IOM, UNHCR and other organisations have all taken steps to provide and promote the use of standardised definitions of key population, migration and displacement terms within their respective areas of responsibility.

In parallel with recognising these international recommendations, the STATAFRIC Guidelines seek harmonisation with existing AU frameworks, legal instruments and policies, and will take into consideration the specificities and realities of the African continent. Moreover, various Regional Economic Communities are making efforts to improve the harmonisation of migration and displacement statistics in their respective RECs. Guidelines produced by the RECs are aligned with existing standards and recommendations at a global level and complement the STATAFRIC Guidelines, while reflecting the various needs and realities of the RECs.

2.1 UN Revised Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration

Migration is a demographic and developmental phenomenon that has evolved in terms of scale, patterns and drivers over time. Historically shaped by trade, colonisation and labour demands, contemporary migration is increasingly influenced by globalisation, economic disparities, conflict, environmental change and demographic shifts. As such, it plays a significant role in shaping population dynamics, labour markets, urbanisation and transnational connections, making it both a challenge and an opportunity for development at local, national and global levels.

For this reason, it is important to ensure that its conceptual definition and understanding reflect the way in which it has changed. Consequently, from 2018 and onwards, a UN Expert Group worked on updating the 1998 Recommendations on International Migration Statistics.

The revised Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility were endorsed at the UN Statistical Commission in March 2025, replacing the previous recommendations from 1998. In its decision[4], the Statistical Commission highlighted the benefits of integrating migration data systems into broader population data systems and welcomed the alignment of the revised Recommendations with other international statistical frameworks relevant to migration[5].

The Statistical Commission further recognised the diversity of migration data systems, of data capacity, and the challenges countries may face in producing migration data, and highlighted the crucial role of capacity building and sharing lessons learnt to advance the implementation of the Recommendations. Finally, emphasis was given to the importance of collaboration between NSOs, data sharing within countries and bilateral data exchange between countries to further strengthen and harmonise statistics on migration.

The STATAFRIC Guidelines on Migration and Displacement Statistics strive to facilitate the application of the new recommendations effectively.

The revised Recommendations are based on a conceptual framework for international migration statistics that seeks to balance the need for standardised concepts and definitions—ensuring comparability of indicators across countries—with the need to accommodate national priorities and varying levels of statistical development.

In the 1998 Recommendations, the definition of a migrant was linked to the concept of 'usual resident'. Whereas the 1998 recommendations refer to 'usual resident' as a place of usual rest, the current recommendations drop the term "usual" and link the concept of "resident" to that indicated by the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Census. This defines it as the place where you either spend the majority of a given year OR at least a full year with the exception of work or business trips. A major distinction between the 1998 and current recommendations is the dropping of the categories of "long-term and short-term migrants"[6], which no longer exist.

4 Decision 56/109

5 https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/sconcerns/migration/docs/Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility.pdf

6 The previous recommendations suggested that a person who establishes residence in the new country for at least 12 months is referred to as a 'long-term' international migrant, while a person who establishes residence for at least three months but less than 12 months is referred to as a 'short-term' migrant (with exceptions for movements for holidays, visits, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage).

Textbox 1. Situating international migration in the context of international mobility

All movements that cross international borders within a given year can be classified as international mobility. There are two categories of international mobility: international migration and international temporary mobility. International migration is defined as a change in the country of residence, while international temporary mobility includes all international border crossings (events) other than those related to changes in country of residence. Thus, populations and their corresponding international mobility can be split into two distinct groups: (i) resident population and international migration and (ii) temporary (non-resident) population and international temporary mobility.

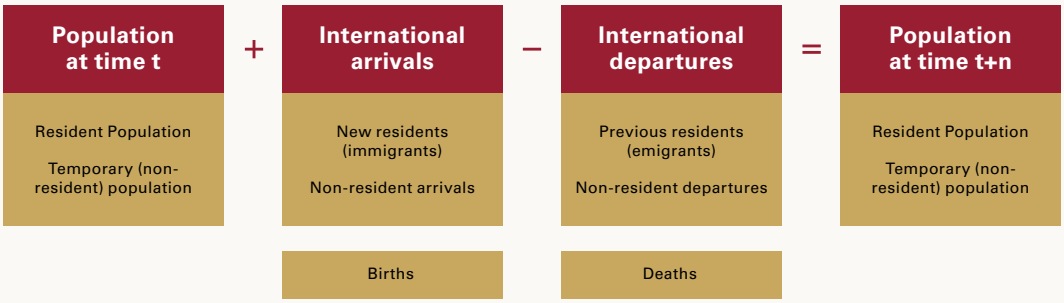
A key objective of the new conceptual framework is to emphasise the importance of the link between migration stocks and flows when it comes to understanding and improving statistics around international migration. Four sub-population groups are defined by country of birth and country of citizenship, forming the basis for stock and flow statistics on international migration data. These are:

- Native-born (native) citizens
- Native-born foreign citizens
- Foreign-born citizens
- Foreign-born foreign citizens

These four key sub-population groups enable the alignment of migration data with the demographic accounting equation and the integration of migration flows into national population statistics.

Furthermore, an increasing amount of international mobility is of a temporary nature, with economic and social impacts on a country. In response to policy needs, the new framework addresses temporary international movements and specifies how they impact temporary populations. These are movements that do not meet the change in residence threshold referred to above and can include cross-border workers, seasonal workers, health-related mobility, asylum seekers, including those in transit, and training-related movements. In these cases, each movement can last for a period of days, weeks or months, but never more than the chosen threshold. These will vary depending on country contexts.

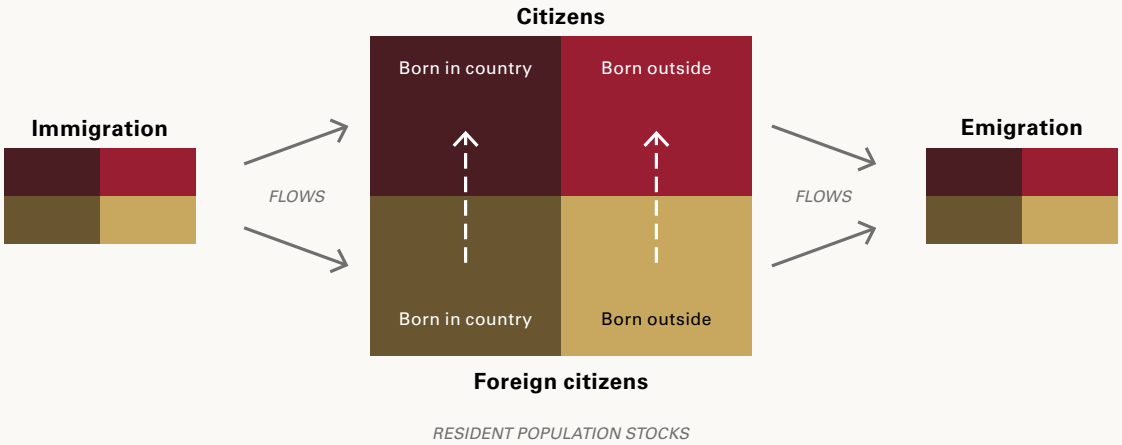
The figure below shows the overarching conceptual framework for international mobility, which includes both the resident population and the temporary (non-resident) population.



Source: UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility 2025

The resident population changes between time t and t+n through the addition of new residents and births and the subtraction of previous residents (i.e. persons leaving the country to become resident in another country) and deaths. Similarly, the temporary (non-resident) population changes as a result of adding arrivals of people who are not residents of the country (and possibly births among them) and subtracting departures of people who are not residents (and possibly deaths among them). This framework indicates that measurements of international arrivals and departures should distinguish between arrivals of new residents and non-residents and departures of previous residents and non-residents[7].

The diagram below explains how stocks and flows are aligned in a migration statistics system, taking into account country of birth and country of citizenship, as well as the process of naturalisation. It must be noted that this refers to the resident population.



Source: UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility 2025

7 The flow from non-residents to residents is described in the revised Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility.

2.2 Other Key International Statistical Recommendations and Frameworks

The international statistical community, including UN Member States, Agencies, regional bodies, international non-governmental organisations and experts, have addressed the need to standardise the statistical definitions related to migration and displacement. They have developed international recommendations, several of which have been internationally endorsed in recent years, and agreed though different platforms to identify and recommend priority indicators to establish comparable statistics. This section provides an overview of existing international recommendations, other than the above UN Revised Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility. It includes those that have secured international approval, those that are expected to do so soon, and other thematic initiatives.

2.2.1 Recommendations from the Expert Group on Refugee, Internally Displaced Persons and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS)

The Expert Group on Refugee, Internally Displaced Persons and Statelessness Statistics has produced three sets of statistical standards: the International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics (IRRS), endorsed by the UNSC in 2018, the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS), endorsed by the UNSC in 2020 and the International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS), endorsed by the UNSC in 2023.

International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics (IRRS)

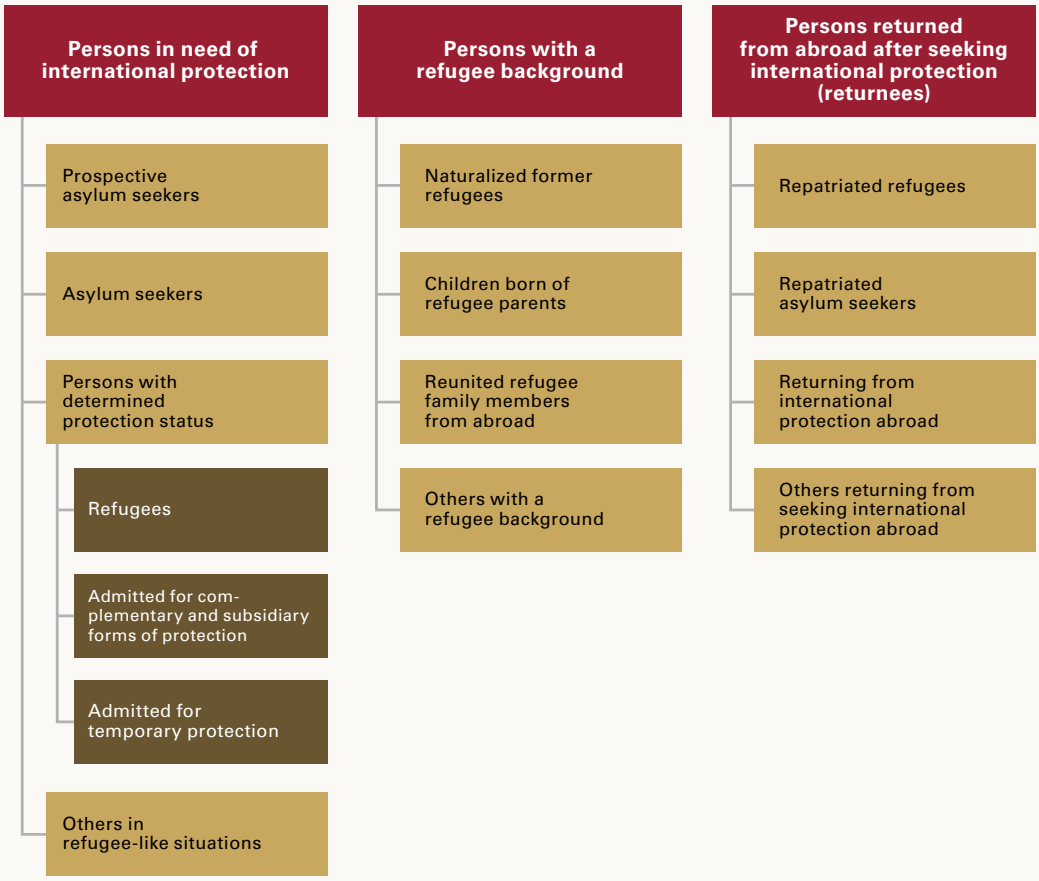
The International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics (IRRS) represent the world's first comprehensive guidance for the production of refugee statistics. Previously only short references to refugee statistics (primarily concerning those residing in camps) were included in wider migration or other statistical guidance. The IRRS are rooted in the legal framework and provide a statistical framework and definitions for refugees and related population groups, recommended statistics and indicators to be produced, including for the measurement of refugee integration, and guidance on how the use of data sources and statistical coordination mechanisms can be enhanced.

In international law, the term "refugee" is defined by the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Article 1) and its 1967 Protocol as a person "who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it". The refugee statistical framework is rooted in this legal definition, with adaptations made for its application in data collection processes, to provide a clear and inclusive framework for all countries to use for statistical purposes.

The IRRS cover refugees and refugee-related populations consisting of three groups:

- **Persons in Need of International Protection:** This includes individuals in a country other than their own who are seeking or who have received international protection. It is further divided into four sub-categories, as outlined in the Refugee Statistical Framework, including refugees and asylum-seekers.
- **Persons With a Refugee Background:** This comprises persons who are not currently in need of international protection but who have a refugee background. It is further divided into four sub-categories, as outlined in the Refugee Statistical Framework, including children born to refugee parents.
- **Persons Returned from Abroad After Seeking International Protection:** This includes those returning to their home country after seeking international protection abroad.

The Refugee Statistical Framework



The IIRRS provide valuable guidance on data sources, variables, tabulations, statistical outputs, and coordination mechanisms, offering more detailed information on these topics. They are available in multiple languages, including English, French, Spanish, Russian, and Arabic[8].

8 https://egrisstats.org/recommendations-international-recommendations-on-refugee-statistics-irrs/

International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS)

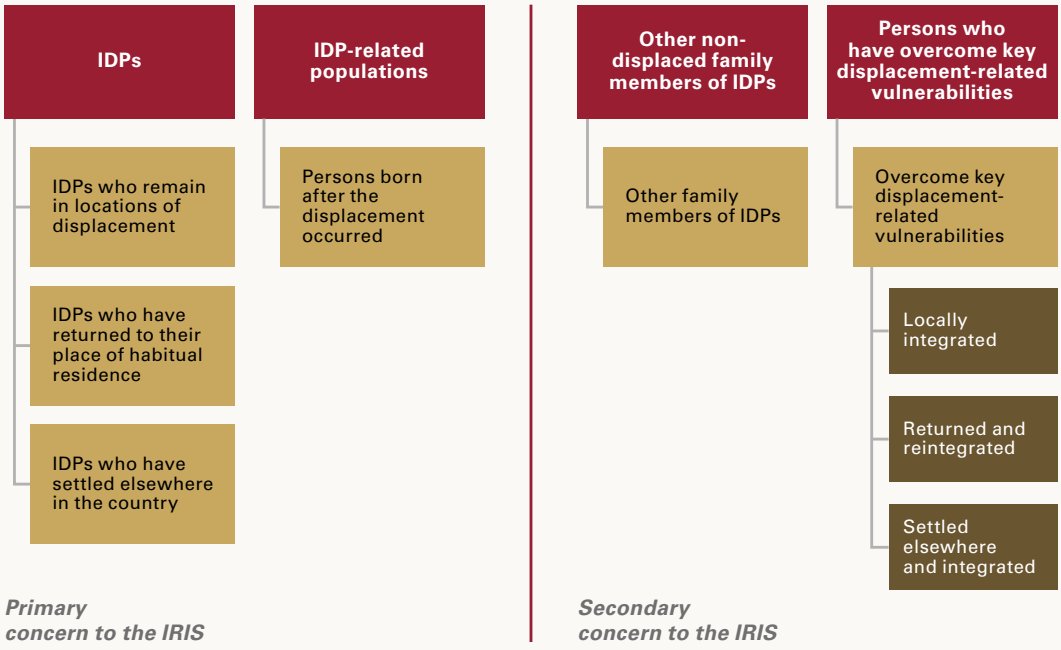
The International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS) present the world's first internationally agreed upon guidance for statistics on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). They are rooted in key international policy frameworks, namely the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and relevant regional frameworks such as the Kampala Convention. The IRIS provide a statistical framework, defining population groups included, and outline recommendations for variables and tabulations, measuring durable solutions and key displacement-related vulnerabilities, using different data sources, and improving statistical coordination.

The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement describe IDPs as "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border".

The recommendations cover statistical categories of IDPs, IDP-related populations (such as children of at least one internally displaced parent, not included in the overall count), other non-displaced family members of IDPs and those who have overcome key displacement-related vulnerabilities:

- IDPs are divided into three sub-stocks based on different locations where they reside at the time of data collection: IDPs in locations of displacement, IDPs in locations of return and IDPs in other settlement locations.
- For those who have overcome key displacement-related vulnerabilities, a statistical assessment is needed to be removed from the IDP stock. They are divided into: locally integrated, returned and reintegrated and settled elsewhere and integrated.

The Internal Displacement Statistical Framework



The recommendations concerning IDPs cover:

- Total stock of IDPs according to the UN Guiding Principles, i.e. those who have been forcibly moved out of their usual place of residence due to conflict, generalised violence or natural disaster.
- Inflow of IDPs in locations of displacement, locations of return and other settlement locations.
- Outflow of IDPs who have emigrated and established a new country of usual residence, IDPs who have died in displacement, IDPs who have overcome key displacement-related vulnerabilities.

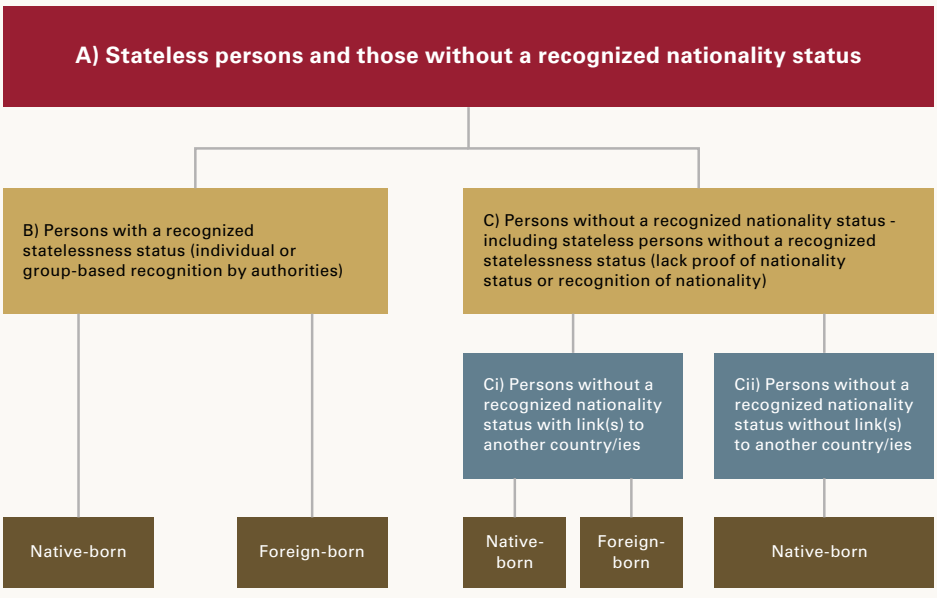
The IRIS provide further information on data sources, variables, tabulations, statistics and statistical coordination. They are available in English, French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic[9].

International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS)

The International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS) present the world's first internationally agreed upon guidance for statistics on statelessness. They are rooted in key international legal frameworks, namely the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (the 1954 Convention) and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (the 1961 Convention). The IROSS provide a statistical framework, defining population groups included, and outline recommendations for variables and tabulations, policy-relevant statistics to be produced, using different data sources, and improving statistical coordination.

According to the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (the 1954 Convention), a stateless person is defined as "a person who is not considered a national by any State under the operation of its law". The statelessness statistical framework is based on this legal definition, with adaptations made for data collection purposes, providing a clear and inclusive framework for all countries to use. The framework distinguishes stateless persons and those without a recognised nationality status (category A). The IROSS divide stateless populations into persons with a recognised statelessness status and persons without a recognised nationality status (categories B and C). This group is further divided into those with link to another country and those who do not have any such link (categories Ci and Cii).

The Statelessness Statistical Framework



9 https://egrisstats.org/recommendations/international-recommendations-on-idp-statistics-iris/

Statelessness data face the most challenges, with huge data gaps globally and especially in Africa with the absence of official data on stateless persons.

The IROSS provide further information on data sources, variables, tabulations and statistics, and statistical coordination. They are available in English (other languages are forthcoming)[10].

2.2.2 21st International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) Revised Guidelines Concerning Statistics of International Labour Migration and Mobility

The ICLS revised guidelines from the ILO are a comprehensive set of standards and recommendations developed to support countries in establishing and/or strengthening their national programmes for statistics on international labour migration and mobility. They provide dedicated guidance for the production of statistics on the labour market characteristics of different groups of international migrants, including refugees, and of temporary mobile populations, while ensuring consistency, comparability and accuracy in data collection and reporting.

These guidelines were first endorsed by the 20th ICLS in 2018. Following the call for improved migration data by the Global Compact on Migration that same year, the ILO launched a revision of the guidelines to be aligned with the updates taking place in closely related statistical standards. The revision was endorsed in 2023 by the 21st ICLS, which called on the ILO to publish revised guidelines by 2025. The revised guidelines build on the concepts, definitions, classifications and measurement guidance contained in the statistical standards covering closely related topics, particularly on population, international migration, refugees and related populations, statelessness, labour, trade in services and other topics.

Moreover, the 21st ICLS revised Guidelines define the following priority groups: International migrants in the labour force, returned migrants and emigrants with employment experience abroad, residents employed abroad and non-residents employed in the country.

Further dedicated guidance will be provided in the forthcoming *21st ICLS revised Guidelines concerning statistics of international labour migration and mobility and in the Mapping and assessing sources for international labour migration statistics*[11].

2.2.3 The International Classification for Administrative Data on Trafficking in Persons (IC-TIP)

IC-TIP was developed by the IOM and UNODC in close collaboration and was endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission in March 2025[12]. The IC-TIP provides the first standardised global framework for the collection and classification of data on trafficking in persons, addressing global gaps in reliability and comparability. The classification provides a standard framework for TIP indicators on the event, the victims and the perpetrators, as well as metadata on the reporting entity ensuring the availability of reliable, consistent, comparable and actionable data on trafficking in persons. The IC-TIP was developed through an extensive desk review, bilateral consultations, expert workshops and extensive global consultations from 2019–2024 and aligns with UNODC's International Classification of Crime for Statistical purposes (ICCS). The accompanying manual, Making each case count: Leveraging Administrative Data on Trafficking in Persons, provides guidance for implementing IC-TIP and producing statistics using different trafficking in persons administrative data sources at the national level.

10 https://egrisstats.org/recommendations/international-recommendations-on-statelessness-statistics-iross/

11 International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) documents - ILOSTAT

12 E/CN.3/2025/16

2.2.4 Other Relevant Frameworks

Although not internationally endorsed through authoritative statistical mechanisms, other relevant initiatives exist that relate to this agenda. Two recent examples stand out: the International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC) and the Data for Solutions to Internal Displacement (DSID) Initiative.

The International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC) is jointly led by Eurostat, IOM, OECD, UNHCR and chaired by UNICEF, and brings together governments (experts from national statistical offices and migration- and displacement-related ministries), international and regional organisations, NGOs, academia and others. The alliance is a cross-sectoral global coalition that aims to improve data and statistics and support evidence-based policy making for children who are directly or indirectly affected by migration and displacement.

Related to this initiative, the IDAC has developed both a guidance document on key terms, definitions and concepts, as well as guidelines with recommendations on data collection and indicators (yet to be endorsed by the UNSC).

The guidance document aims to promote a conceptual understanding of children on the move—who they are, the subgroups they constitute, what differentiates them and how they are counted (or not counted)—and to unpack key migration and displacement terms that relate to children.

The indicator guidelines on children on the move were prepared in close consultation with, and with technical input and feedback from, a wide and diverse range of stakeholders, including representatives of NSOs and line ministries of more than 20 countries, 10 UN entities and several more experts from regional organisations, other international organisations and academia. (See further details in Chapter 9 Additional data for migration policy.)[13]

The Data for Solutions to Internal Displacement (DSID) initiative emerged from the UN Action Agenda on Internal Displacement and its commitments to improve operational data on displacement-related vulnerabilities and progress toward durable solutions to further government planning and investments that address the socio-economic impact of displacement.. The document—developed by the DSID Working Group chaired by the IOM and UNDP—provides a strategic framework aimed at strengthening data systems to support durable solutions to internal displacement and builds on an earlier 2023 DSID Proposal. The initiative provides guidance on various statistical measures (e.g. IDP stock figures, composite, progress and solutions pathway measures) aligned with the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS) and outlines a coordination approach for harmonising data collection at global and country level and use across humanitarian, development and governmental actors. It promotes government-led, development-anchored solutions informed by coherent, standardised data systems[14].

13 IDAC-COM-Terminology-Brief.pdf
Guidelines-on-Indicators-for-Children-on-the-Move-FINAL.pdf

14 Revised Data for Solutions to Internal Displacement (DSID) Initiative - EGRISS

Concepts and Definitions

CHAPTER

3

The compilation of main concepts and definitions is based on the various international recommendations described above, most of which are in turn grounded in legal and policy conventions and frameworks. The list provided here is not exhaustive, but attempts to include the most commonly used concepts and definitions in migration and displacement statistics.

As becomes clear when reviewing the list below, not all the concepts and definitions that describe population categories are fully distinct or mutually exclusive, which reveals the complex reality of population mobility and in turn strengthens migration and displacement statistics coherently. For example, whilst most refugees fall within the international migrant stock and some fall into temporary mobility, there are also recognised refugees who have never crossed an international border and therefore fall outside of migration statistics. Whilst many assume asylum seekers should be included in the temporary mobile populations, given the severe delays in many asylum procedures, many asylum seekers, like refugees, should be included as part of the international migration stock. Concerning internal displacement, which can impact all residents of an affected area of a country, international migrants and refugees can also be internally displaced. For stateless populations, some are also refugees, some are IDPs, some are international migrants and some are simply in-situ stateless. In short, there is a lot to unpack, several overlapping groupings and many nuances. A proper grounding in the key related concepts is therefore a critical starting point for improving migration and displacement statistics.

For more concepts and details, see the respective international recommendations, primarily the Revised UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility, the 21st ICLS revised Guidelines concerning statistics of international labour migration and mobility[15][16] , International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics (IRRS), International Recommendations on Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (IRIS) and International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS).

3.1 Main Concepts and Definitions on International Migration and Displacement Statistics

The most frequently used concepts and definitions are grouped according to broad areas of migration and displacement statistics. These areas are:

- migration and mobility
- immigration
- emigration
- population
- labour force statistics
- international labour mobility
- forced displacement
- trafficking in persons
- remittances

Migration and Mobility:

International Mobility

All movements that cross international borders within a given year, excluding tourism and business travel. (UN, Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility, 2025)

International Temporary Mobility

All movements that cross international borders that do not result in a change in the country of residence. (Source see above)

International Migration

All movements resulting in a change in the country of residence (a subset of international mobility) within a given year. (Source see above)

International Migrant

A person who has changed his or her country of residence and established new residence in the country in a given year (see definition of resident population). An international migrant can be either an 'immigrant' or 'emigrant' and include those with national or foreign citizenships or stateless persons. (Source see above)

Country of Origin

In the migration context, a country of nationality or of former habitual residence of a person or group of persons who have migrated abroad, irrespective of whether they migrated regularly or irregularly. (IOM Key migration terms)

15 Forthcoming

16 Hereafter referred as ICLS revised Guidelines

Country of Birth

Country of birth is the country in which the person was born. The concept of county of birth usually refers to the country where the mother of the individual resided at the time of the person's birth. In some countries, however, country of birth is defined as the country in which the birth actually took place. Either concept can be used depending on the information needs of the country (UN DESA/SD, Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, 2017).

Country of Destination

In the migration context, a country that is the destination for a person or a group of persons, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly. (IOM Key migration terms)

Country of Previous Residence

Country of previous residence is the foreign country, in which the individual resided immediately prior to migrating into the civil division of present usual residence (UN DESA/SD, Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, 2017).

Circular Movement

Includes persons who are not residents of the country and who travelled to the same country more than once during a particular year[17]. (UNECE, Defining and Measuring Circular Migration, 2016)

Immigration:

Immigration (flow)

All persons entering the country and becoming part of the resident population within a given year, including persons with national or foreign citizenships or stateless persons. (UN, Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility, 2025)

Immigrant Population (Stock) or International Immigrants (Stock)

All persons who reside in the country who are either born in another country or who do not hold national citizenship, including stateless persons, at a given point in time. Persons who are born in the country and have national citizenship are not considered part of the immigrant population, although they can be considered immigrants or part of the immigration flow if they returned and changed their country of residence. (Source see above)

Returned Migrants (stock)

Persons who previously resided in the country of measurement who emigrated and subsequently came back to live in the country and stayed or intended to stay for the minimum duration required for residence. (UN, Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility, 2025)

Emigration:

Emigration (flow)

All persons leaving the country to become a part of another country's resident population within a given year, including persons with national or foreign citizenships or stateless persons. (Source see above)

Emigrant Population (stock)

All national citizens or persons who were born in the country and are residing in another country at a given point in time. (Source see above)

17 Provided these movements were less than the minimum duration required for residency in a particular year.

Population:

Resident Population / Place of Residence

Individuals who either (a) have lived most of the last 12 months within a given year or have the intention of staying (or have been granted leave to stay) for at least 6 months; or (b) have lived at least 12 months within a given year or have the intention of staying (or have been granted leave to stay) for at least 12 months, not including temporary absence for holidays or work assignments. (UN, Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Rev. 4, 2025)

Temporary (Non-resident) Population

All persons who have stayed or intend to stay (or have been granted leave to stay) in the country for less than the minimum duration required for residency in a particular year. (UN, Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility, 2025)

Foreign-born Population (stock)

All persons who reside in the country at a particular time who were born in another country. (Source see above)

Native-born Population (stock)

All persons who reside in the country at a particular time who were born in the same country. (Source see above)

Foreign Citizen Population (stock)

All persons who reside in the country at a particular time who do not hold national citizenship, including those without citizenship (stateless). (Source see above)

National Citizen Population (stock)

All persons who reside in the country at a particular time who have national citizenship. (Source see above)

Country of Citizenship corresponds to nationality in this document.

Labour force statistics:

Working Age Population

The population above the legal working age, but for statistical purposes it comprises all persons above a specified minimum age threshold for which an inquiry on economic activity is made. To promote international comparability, the working-age population is often defined as all persons aged 15 and older, but this may vary from country to country based on national laws and practices (some countries also apply an upper age limit i.e. 15-64 years).

For purposes of international comparability, the working-age population is defined as all persons over the legal age to work, i.e. 15 years and over

(ICLS/19/2013 amended in ICLS/21/2023).

Employed Person

A person of working age who, during a short reference period, was engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit, it comprises:

- employed persons "at work", i.e. who worked in a job for at least one hour.
- employed persons "not at work" due to temporary absence from a job, or to working-time arrangements (such as shift work, flex time, compensatory leave for overtime, etc.).

(ICLS/19/2013 amended in ICLS/21/2023).

Unemployed Person

A person of working age who, was not in employment, carried out activities to seek employment during a specified recent period and were currently available to take up employment given a job opportunity, where:

- "not in employment" is assessed with respect to the short reference period for the measurement of employment.
- to "seek employment" refers to any activity when carried out, during a specified recent period comprising the last four weeks or one month, for the purpose of finding a job or setting up a business or agricultural undertaking. This includes also search for part-time, informal, temporary, seasonal or casual employment, within the national territory or abroad.

(ICLS/19/2013 amended in ICLS/21/2023).

Persons Outside the Labour Force

All those neither employed nor unemployed in the short reference period.

Labour Force

Comprises all persons of working age (i.e. aged 15 or above) who were either "employed" or "unemployed" (during the reference period).

Labour Underutilization

Refers to mismatches between labour supply and demand, which translate into an unmet need for employment among the population. Measures of labour underutilization include, but may not be restricted to:

- time-related underemployment, when the working time of persons in employment is insufficient in relation to alternative employment situations in which they are willing and available to engage
- unemployment, reflecting an active job search by persons not in employment who are available for this form of work
- potential labour force, refers to all persons of working age who, during the short reference period, were unavailable job seekers or available potential job seekers.
    - Unavailable job seekers: All those not employed who carried out activities to seek employment, but were not currently available to start working
    - Available potential job seekers: All those not employed who did not carry out activities to "seek employment" but wanted to work and were currently available to start working.

(ICLS/19/2013 amended in ICLS/21/2023).

The "Informal Economy"

Comprises all informal productive activities of persons or economic units, whether or not they are carried out for pay or profit, encompassing both:

the informal sector: Comprises economic units that are producers of goods and services mainly for the market to generate income.

informal employment : Productive activities of persons for pay or profit that are not effectively covered by formal arrangements.

(ICLS/21/2023).

Status in Employment

Refers to the type of explicit or implicit contract of employment persons have in their job.

Occupation

Refers to the type of work done in a job. The type of work done is considered in terms of the main tasks and duties performed in the job. The International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08), Volume 1[18] serves as the current reference to categorize jobs into occupations whose main tasks and duties are characterized by a high degree of similarity. ISCO-08 classifies occupations in a 4-level hierarchy.

Branch of Economic Activity (Industry)

Refers to the main kind of production or activity of the establishment or economic unit where the job of the person is located. The classification centres on what the establishment does, not what the person does when working for that establishment. The International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) revision 5[19], provides the reference classification based on a four-level hierarchy.

International labour mobility:

Labour Attachment

Country of labour attachment is the country in which the international migrant worker was supplying labour to resident producer unit(s) during the specified reference period used for measurement.

International Labour Mobility

Refers to all movements of persons that cross international borders and involve a labour attachment in the country of destination or in a third country.

International Labour Migration

Refers to all movements of persons across international borders resulting in a change in their country of usual residence and that involve a labour attachment in the country of destination or in a third country.

International Temporary Labour Mobility

Refers to all movements of persons across international borders that do not result in a change in their country of usual residence but involve a labour attachment in the country of destination or in a third country.

Definitions of Population Groups Relevant for ILM Statistics (Country of Destination Perspective)

- Working-age international migrants (stock): refers to all foreign-born persons (or foreign citizens) of working age (e.g. 15 and above) usually resident in the country at a given point in time.

- Employed international migrants (stock): refers to all foreign-born persons (or foreign citizens) of working age (e.g. 15 and above) usually resident in the country, who, during a short reference period were counted as employed.
- Unemployed international migrants (stock): refers to all foreign-born persons (or foreign citizens) of working age (e.g. 15 and above) usually resident in the country, who, during a short reference period were counted as unemployed.
- International migrants in the labour force (stock): Sum of employed and unemployed international migrants.

18 See International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08), Volume 1

19 See International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Revision 5

Definitions of Population Groups Relevant for ILM Statistics (Country of Origin Perspective):

- Emigrants with employment experience abroad (stock): refers to emigrants who have employment experience abroad
- Returned international migrants with previous employment experience abroad (stock): refers to returned international migrants who had been employed abroad.

Definitions of Population Groups Relevant for Statistics on International Temporary Labour Mobility

- Residents employed abroad (stock): All residents, regardless of place of birth or citizenship status, employed in a country other than their country of residence.
- Non-residents employed in the country (stock): All persons, regardless of place of birth or citizenship status, employed in the country compiling the statistics, who did not meet the criteria to be counted as part of the resident population of the country.

Revised Guidelines concerning statistics of international labour migration (forthcoming) (ICLS/20/2018 and its amendment ICLS/2023).

Forced Displacement and Statelessness:

Asylum Seeker

An individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualised procedures, an asylum seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognised as a refugee, but every recognised refugee is initially an asylum seeker. (Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Master Glossary of Terms (2006))

Refugee

A person "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it". (The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees amended by its 1967 Protocol)

The above-mentioned core definition in Article 1 of the 1951 Convention is supplemented by regional instruments in Africa and Latin America.

In Africa, Article 1 (2) of the 1969 OAU Convention governing specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa, a binding legal instrument open to all Member States of the African Union, extends the refugee definition to:

"Every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality."

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Persons or groups who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border. (UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 1998)

Stateless Person

A person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law. (UN Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons,1954)

Transnational Organized Crime:

Smuggling of Migrants

The procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the irregular entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.

Source: Adapted from Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (adopted 15 November 2000, entered into force 28 January 2004) 2241 UNTS 507, Art. 3(a).

Trafficking in Persons

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

Article 3 of the Trafficking Protocol stipulates that: "[t]he recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article".

Source: Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (adopted 15 November 2000, entered into force 25 December 2003) 2237 UNTS 319, Art. 3(a).

Remittances:

Remittances

Private international monetary transfers that migrants make, individually or collectively. Remittances are primarily sent to people in countries of origin with whom migrants maintain close links, although, in some cases, they are also sent to relatives in other countries of destination. Increasingly, the terms "social remittances" or "social capital transfer" are used in the context of transfers of non-monetary value as a result of migration, such as transfer of knowledge, know-how, networking and skills. (IOM)

Key Indicators on Migration and Displacement

CHAPTER

4

Relevant indicators for Africa are part of different indicator systems. Governments may have defined indicators referring to national goals in various policy areas. At the regional level, the RECs have established systems of indicators to follow up on regional strategies. At the continental level, the goals of Agenda 2063 are to be monitored by specific indicators. Furthermore, international organisations develop indicators and indicator systems in their respective area of responsibility.

This chapter suggests key migration and displacement indicators for Africa, with the aim of promoting harmonisation and comparability of data across the Member States.

The proposed key indicators for Africa consist of two sets: one set with core stock and flow migration indicators in line with the UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility; the other set comprising additional indicators referring to themes and disaggregation of high relevance for Africa. The indicators and disaggregation can be developed depending on the capacity and/or need of the countries.

In proposing key indicators for Africa, the aim has been to strike a balance between the need for data, which is ever growing, and the possibility of data production at the national level.

Furthermore, migration indicators need to be analysed in relation to the size, distribution (such as

age and sex) and growth of the overall population. Indicators referring to overall population characteristics are not part of this list of key migration indicators. However, patterns and trends referring to the total population should be considered when analysing migration into, within and from the region in question.

For instance, the Labour Migration Statistics Report[20] indicates that although the number of international migrants has increased significantly over the past decades, this growth has been in step with that of the overall African population and the share of migrants in the total population has remained relatively constant at around 2 per cent.

4.1 Core Stock and Flow Migration Indicators

The UN Expert Group on Migration Statistics has developed a list of core and additional migration indicators which were also endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission[21], as part of the process of revising the 1998 Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration.

The core indicators consist of two dedicated to measuring international migration stocks and two dedicated to measuring international migration flows.

The UN Expert Group recommends that these four migration indicators be produced regularly by countries to monitor, assess and understand international migration stocks and flows. However, the levels of statistical development and infrastructure of countries must be taken into account in terms of the ability to produce the required indicators. Furthermore, data gaps where capacity building is required need to be identified and efforts to mobilise the required resources must be part of the implementation and assessment process facilitated by these guidelines.

Against the background of these global guiding frameworks, the core migration indicators proposed in the STATAFRIC Guidelines are built around two fundamental concepts: stock and flow.

These indicators are as follows:

- The stock of international immigrants,
- The flows of international emigrants and immigrants.

20 REPORT ON LABOUR MIGRATION STATISTICS IN AFRICA THIRD EDITION (2019)

21 Decision 54/104

Table 4.1. Core migration indicators

Category/ theme	Migration statistics / indicator	Primary topics for disaggregation	Secondary topics for disaggregation	Data source
Stock of international immigrants	Number/proportion of **international immigrants** in the total resident population.	• Sex • Age • Place of birth (native-born, foreign-born) • Citizenship (native citizen, foreign citizen)	• Location of residence within country • Geographic location (urban, rural) • Country of origin • Labour force status • Duration of stay • Educational attainment • Reasons for migration • Status of parents • Country of previous residence	• Census • Population • Register
	Number/Proportion of **international immigrants with foreign national-ity** who acquired citizenship	• Sex • Age • Place of birth (native-born, foreign-born)		
Flow of immigrants	Annual number of immigrants	• Sex • Age • Place of birth (native-born, foreign-born) • Citizenship (native citizen, foreign citizen)	• Location within country • Country of previous residence • labour force status prior to move • Educational attainment • Reason for migration • Country of previous residence	• Census (for one year if qn on residence at a period in the past) • Admin • Survey
Flow of emigrants	Annual number of emigrants.	• Sex • Age • Place of birth (native-born, foreign-born) • Citizenship (native citizen, foreign citizen)	• Departure location within country • Country of next residence • Labour force status • Educational attainment • Reason for move	• Census (for one year if qn on residence at a period in the past) • Admin • Survey

The recommendation is to disaggregate the statistics by the primary topics of Age, Sex, Country of birth and Country of citizenship. Age and sex are two primary topics for disaggregation and key stratifying demographic variables (coupled with Country of Birth and Country of citizenship) used to ensure that migrants, and temporary populations, are compared and assessed appropriately. As regards information on place of birth, and/or information on citizenship, this might be available depending on national data collection practices. However, the recommendations provide marginals for countries that do not yet have the ability to capture both country of birth and citizenship information.

In addition to these core topics, secondary topics for disaggregation are recommended. These include, among others, educational attainment. The disaggregation depends on national capacity and relevance. The educational background of migrants and displaced populations is important information when it comes to facilitating integration in society and in the labour market. Also, education at various levels assists migrants and displaced populations in gaining the knowledge and skills (including language) necessary for integration.

Where feasible, administrative data from educational authorities, recording learners by migratory status (COB and COC), can support this disaggregation. Alternatively, if education level is collected through population surveys, the different migrant subgroups may be applied (see 2.1 UN Revised Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration).

Another variable recommended as a complementary topic for disaggregation is reason for migration. Reason for migration is of primary interest in order to gain information about key characteristics of migrants. A set of common reasons for migration is available from the UNSD[22] and can be used for stocks (mainly census and survey based) and flows (admin data based).

It should be noted that the topic "reason for migration" has been made additional in the Principles and Recommendations on Population and Housing Censuses, Rev.4 (P&R) due to the difficulty in determining and classifying a single or primary reason, as well as to the multitude of potential reasons applicable in different contexts. Countries can develop questions to ascertain reasons for migration based on their national contexts and priorities.

Textbox 2. RSA: National example of question on reasons for movement

The question on reasons for movement used by Statistics South Africa is shown below as an example.

In the RSA, reasons for movement is a recent, new question and it is recommended to be asked at least for recent migration where call back memory is better, but can be asked for lifetime migration which may refer to many years ago. Reasons are also multiple, so respondents may be asked to pick up to 3 reasons for a recent move. The question can, with some adjustments, be asked for all movements, i.e. for international migration, temporary mobility or internal migration.

MAIN REASON FOR LEAVING PREVIOUS RESIDENCE

What was the MAIN reason for (name) to move to this place?

01 = Start a business/other business reasons (e.g. expansion of business)

02 = Look for paid work

03 = Job transfer/take up a new job opportunity

04 = Divorce/separation

05 = Moving as a household to accompany a household member (for health, education, employment, etc.)

06 = New dwelling for household

07 = Moving to live with or be closer to spouse (marriage), family, friends, partner

08 = Education (e.g. studying, schooling, training)

09 = Health (e.g. poor/ill health)

10 = Retirement

11 = Job loss/retrenchment/contract ended

12 = For better municipal services

13 = Political instability/religious conflict/persecution

14 = High levels of crime

15 = Drought/climate related disaster

16 = Other

17 = Do not know

22 UNITED NATIONS EXPERT GROUP ON MIGRATION STATISTICS 1 Standard questions on international migration. Guidance note for the use in population censuses and household surveys

Furthermore, disaggregation through "reason for migration" is needed to determine those who were forcibly displaced and enable linkage to other international frameworks, like the IRRS. The EGRISS recommendations underline that capturing the reason for migration is essential for identifying displaced populations and distinguishing forced migration from voluntary moves. The IRRS[23] propose adding a reason-for-migration question to the core census topics so that probable refugees can be identified, suggesting five broad response categories. The IRIS has same guidance by recommending a question about the main reason a person came to live in their current location; they emphasise that "forced displacement" should be one of the response options and that only the respondent's primary reason should be recorded.

4.2 Additional Key Migration and Displacement Indicators

In addition to the core stock and flow indicators outlined in 4.1 above, a second set of indicators for Africa is proposed, enabling a closer monitoring of the migrant stocks and flows as well as insights and knowledge about migrant workers, forced displacement, trafficking in persons, as well as remittances. Although countries are encouraged to produce these indicators, the decision to populate them depends on capacity and contexts that would prevail.

The list presented below of additional key migration and displacement indicators for Africa includes examples of indicators in the mentioned areas, informed by the various Recommendations and guidelines outlined in Chapter 2. To gain better knowledge and for a holistic view, countries are encouraged to apply the recommendations and guidelines from the respective specialised organisations.

The areas covered in the additional indicators include:

International Labour Mobility. "To empower labour migrants" is one of the six policy areas identified as relevant for international migration and temporary mobility by the UN Expert Group on Migration Statistics[24]. Six indicators are suggested that could be disaggregated by three primary topics. These indicators are the labour force participation rate, employment to population ratio, informal employment rate, unemployment rate, rate of not in employment, education or training (NEET), and the share of women in managerial positions. The recommended disaggregation variables include age, sex, labour force status and foreign born/native-born or citizenship status. Secondary topics for disaggregation include industry, educational attainment and geographic location.

In addition, the ILO, through the 21st ICLS revised guidelines, have updated their own recommendations, building on the UN migration and the EGRISS recommendations[25], and provide more detailed guidance on priority indicators, tabulations and recommended disaggregation variables to monitor labour market

23 Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (EGRISS), International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics and International Recommendations on Internally Displaced Persons Statistics. These documents outline concepts and methodologies for measuring forcibly displaced populations and recommend a forced-displacement module and a "main reason for migration" question

24 Report of the UN Expert Group on Migration Statistics on Indicators for international migration and temporary mobility

25 The revised ICLS guidelines built on the concepts, definitions, classifications and measurement guidance contained in the statistical standards covering closely related topics. See
UN Recommendations for statistics of international migration and temporary mobility (2025)
UN Principles and Recommendations for Population Censuses, revision 4 (2025)
EGRISS International recommendations on statelessness statistics (2023)
EGRISS International recommendations on refugee statistics (2018), 19th ICLS Resolution concerning statistics on work, employment and labour underutilization (2013, amended 2023)

participation, access and the working conditions of international migrants, including refugees. These include the headline labour market indicators listed above, as well as indicators of labour underutilisation that complement the unemployment rate, and other key indicators such as the recruitment cost indicator (SDG 10.7.1). From a country-of-origin perspective, the 21st ICLS revised Guidelines further highlight priority data, indicators and disaggregations to monitor the employment experience and skills of recent emigrants and of returned international migrants, with a main focus on capturing the occupation, industry and years of employment experience abroad, in addition to migration characteristics such as the country of destination and date of departure/return.

Additional indicators are recommended for countries where cross-border work is prevalent, particularly to generate statistics on frontier workers, seasonal workers, cross-border service suppliers and others. These include indicators on residents working abroad, as well as on non-residents working in the country, by sex, age, industry, occupation, country of residence, country of place of work and country of the employer economic unit.

Table 4.2. Additional key migration indicators enabling in-depth analysis of international migrant workers

Category/ theme	Migration statistics / indicator	Primary topics for disaggregation	Secondary topics for disaggregation	Data source
Stocks relating to international migrant workers	**International migrants of working age:** • Labour force participation rate • Employment to population ratio • Rate of time-related underemployment • Unemployment rate (LU1) • Underutilisation rates (LU2, LU3, LU4)	• Sex • Age (at a minimum: 15-24, 25-55, 65+) • Place of birth (native-born, foreign-born) • Citizenship (native citizen, foreign citizen) • Forced displacement status • Level of educational attainment	• Disability status • Type of living quarters	• Census • Labour force surveys • Household Income and Expenditure Survey • Administrative source
	Employed international migrants: Status in employment Occupation Branch of economic activity Share of employed in informal employment Share of employed in informal sector employment Mean monthly earnings	• Sex • Age (at a minimum: 15-24, 25-55, 65+) • Place of birth (native-born, foreign-born) • Citizenship (native citizen, foreign citizen) • Forced displacement status • Level of educational attainment	• Disability status • Type of living quarters	• Census • Labour force surveys • Household Income and Expenditure Survey • Administrative source

Forced Displacement. Forcibly displaced people have specific protection needs, are often more vulnerable, are often more vulnerable,and their social, economic, health or environmental situations need to be catered for. The categories of forcibly displaced (refugees, IDPs and stateless people), asylum seekers and others are grouped as "Forced Displacement" under Reasons for migration. Countries should opt to disaggregate stocks and flows by the various categories of forcibly displaced. Variables of disaggregation such as age and country of birth/country of citizenship are important in countries where these groups are prevalent.

In addition, in line with the IRRS and IRIS, it is recommended that the following key indicators are produced.

Table 4.3. Additional key indicators enabling in-depth analysis of forced displacement

Category/ theme	Migration statistics / indicator	Primary topics for disaggregation	Secondary topics for disaggregation	Data source
IRRS				
Stock	**Basic statistics regarding stocks of persons in need of international protection should include total numbers of:** • asylum seekers • refugees • persons admitted for subsidiary, complementary protection • persons admitted for temporary protection • persons with refugee-like status • persons with a refugee background	• Age • Sex	• Geographic location (urban, rural) • Disability status, • Refugee/asylum seeker status • Reason for displacement • Labour force status •	• Census • Admin • Survey
Stock	**Key indicators of persons in need of international protection should include percentage/proportion of total population in the country who are:** • under international protection • asylum seekers with determined status • persons in a country for international protection who have remained for 10 years/ over 10 years	• Age • Sex	• Geographic location (urban, rural) • Disability status, • Refugee/asylum seeker status • Reason for displacement • Labour force status	• Census • Admin • Survey
Flow	**Basic statistics regarding flow of persons in need of international protection should include total number of persons who entered a country for international protection:** • who intended to submit an application for asylum for the first time during a period of time and were unable to do so • who submitted an application for asylum for the first time during a period of time • during a period of time who were prima facie refugees • during a period of time who were resettled refugees from another host country • during a period of time who were reunified refugee family members • who are under the age of 18 years without accompanying parent	• Age • Sex	• Geographic location (urban, rural) • Disability status, • Refugee/asylum seeker status • Reason for displacement • Labour force status	• Census • Admin • Survey
Flow	**Key indicators of flow of persons in need of international protection should include percentage of:** • asylum application decisions that are positive (or negative) during a period of time • determined refugee status granted during a period of time, by type • rejected asylum seekers who left the country during a period of time • persons entered for international protection during a period of time who were resettled elsewhere • total number of asylum seekers who received a decision during a period of time • recognition rate during a period of time [the added value of the use of longitudinal information in more adequate calculation of the recognition rate should be acknowledged].	• Age • Sex	• Geographic location (urban, rural) • Disability status, • Refugee/asylum seeker status • Reason for displacement • Labour force status	• Census • Admin • Survey

Category/ theme	Migration statistics / indicator	Primary topics for disaggregation	Secondary topics for disaggregation	Data source
Stock	**Basic statistics regarding stocks of persons with a refugee background should include total numbers of:** • persons with a refugee background • naturalised former refugees • descendants of refugee parents who are not refugees themselves • persons in the country as a result of refugee family reunification • other persons with a refugee background • An additional indicator should be the percentage of the total population who have a refugee background	• Age • Sex	• Geographic location (urban, rural) • Disability status, • Reason for displacement • Labour force status	• Census • Admin • Survey
Stock	Stocks of persons returned after having sought international protection abroad. **Total number of:** • persons returning to their country of habitual residence after having sought international protection abroad • repatriated refugees • repatriated asylum seekers • persons returned after having received international protection other than refugee status abroad • other persons returned • A key indicator should be the percentage of this population among all returned citizens	• Age • Sex	• Geographic location (urban, rural) • Disability status, • Reason for displacement • Labour force status	• Census • Admin • Survey
Flow	**Flows of citizens returning from having sought international protection abroad should include the total number of:** • persons who returned to their country of habitual residence after having sought international protection abroad • repatriated refugees • repatriated asylum seekers • persons returned after having received international protection other than refugee status abroad • others returned after seeking international protections abroad	• Age • Sex	• Geographic location (urban, rural) • Disability status, • Reason for displacement • Labour force status	• Census • Admin • Survey
IRIS				
Flow	**Basic inflow** statistics for **IDPs** • Total number of persons in a country who were forcibly displaced first time. **Basic inflow** statistics **for IDP-related persons**: • Total number of children born to at least one IDP parent after the parents' last displacement	• Age • Sex	• Geographic location (urban, rural) • Disability status, • Reason for displacement • Labour force status	• Census • Admin • Survey
Flow	**Basic outflow** statistics should include total number **of IDPs** who: • have died or emigrated • who have overcome all key displace-ment-related vulnerabilities	• Age • Sex	• Geographic location (urban, rural) • Disability status, • Reason for displacement • Labour force status	• Census • Admin • Survey

Category/ theme	Migration statistics / indicator	Primary topics for disaggregation	Secondary topics for disaggregation	Data source
Flow	**Basic flow statistics between IDP sub-stocks** Total number of IDPs who have moved from the sub-stock of IDPs in locations of displacement to the sub-stocks of IDPs in locations of return and other settlement locations	• Age • Sex	• Geographic location (urban, rural) • Disability status, • Reason for displacement • Labour force status	• Census • Admin • Survey
Stock	Basic stock statistics for **IDPs** should include • total number of IDPs in a country by proposed disaggregation • total number of IDP unaccompanied and separated children aged under 18 years	• Age • Sex	• Geographic location (urban, rural) • Disability status, • Reason for displacement • Labour force status	• Census • Admin • Survey
Stock	Basic stock statistics for **IDP-related persons** in a country	• Age • Sex	• Geographic location (urban, rural) • Disability status, • Reason for displacement • Labour force status	• Census • Admin • Survey
Stock	**Basic stock statistics for:** • Total number of persons who have overcome key displacement-related vulnerabilities	• Age • Sex	• Geographic location (urban, rural) • Disability status, • Reason for displacement • Labour force status	• Census • Admin • Survey

Furthermore, a set of priority SDG indicators were incorporated into the IRRS, IRIS and IROSS, to be disaggregated by forced displacement status, in three key policy areas:

- Basic needs and living conditions indicators
  - 2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years of age
  - 3.1.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
  - 6.1.1 Proportion of the population using safely managed drinking water services
  - 11.1.1 Proportion of the urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing
- Livelihoods and economic self-reliance indicators
  - 1.2.1 Proportion of the population living below the national poverty line
  - 4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people achieving minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics
  - 7.1.1 Proportion of the population with access to electricity
  - 8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in total employment
  - 8.5.2 Unemployment rate
- Civil, political and legal rights indicators
  - 1.4.2 Proportion of the total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognised documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure
  - 16.1.4 Proportion of the population who feel safe walking alone around the area they live
  - 16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority

Half of the prioritised EGRISS SDG indicators are in the Data Sources for International Migration Statistics and Operationalization of the Revised Conceptual Framework as well as in IDAC Framework.[26]

With regard to statelessness, the IROSS recognise that stateless persons face distinct legal and social barriers. To reflect this, the IROSS identify four additional priority SDG indicators beyond those already listed for forced displacement. These indicators—5.1.1 (whether legal frameworks promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex), 17.18.1 (the statistical capacity indicator on producing disaggregated SDG data), and two related to perceptions of discrimination (16.b.1 and 10.3.1)—should be disaggregated by statelessness status so that national statistical systems can monitor progress in eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal rights for people without a recognised nationality. Together with the IRRS and IRIS indicators, they ensure that refugees, IDPs and stateless persons are not left behind in SDG monitoring.

Trafficking in Persons (TIP): Indicators on the number of recorded trafficking in persons (TIP) events during a given period are essential tools for monitoring criminal dynamics, analysing typologies of exploitation, as well as assessing institutional responses at national, regional and continental levels. Trafficking in persons events are the units of classification, with the victims, perpetrators, and reporting entities associated with them being units of description.

In line with the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS), these data can be disaggregated by specific forms of exploitation, allowing for a more detailed and targeted understanding of trafficking realities across different contexts.

This approach strengthens data comparability, supports evidence-based policymaking and enhances efforts in prevention, protection and prosecution.

26 More in methodological paper: 'Capturing Priority SDG Indicators in Refugee, Internal Displacement and Statelessness Contexts', https://egrisstats.org/resource/egriss-methodological-paper-3/

Table 4.4. Additional key migration indicators measuring details of Trafficking in Persons

Category/ theme	Migration statistics / indicator	Primary topics for disaggregation	Secondary topics for disaggregation	Data source

Flow	**Annual number of TIP cases by type of exploitation:**
	• 1: TIP for sexual exploitation (International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS) 02041)
	• **2: TIP for forced labour (ICCS 02042)**
	  • 2.1: Forced/bonded labour (including servitude and indentured servitude)
	  • 2.2: Slavery or similar practices
	• **3: TIP for organ removal (ICCS 02043)**
	• **4: TIP for forced begging (ICCS 02131)**
	• **5: TIP for forced criminality (ICCS 02329)**
	  • 5.1 Theft
	  • 5.2 Other property crimes
	  • 5.3 Drug offences
	  • 5.4 Fraud (including online scam operations)
	  • 5.5 Other types of crimes
	• **6: TIP for other forms of exploitation (ICCS 02044)**
	  • 6.1 TIP for forced marriage
	  • 6.2 TIP for forced military service (by non-State actors)
	  • 6.3 TIP for surrogacy
	  • 6.4 TIP for illegal adoption
	  • 6.5 TIP for other exploitation
	• **7: TIP for purposes not recorded**
	• **8: TIP for mixed forms of exploitation**
		• Age
		• Sex
		• Place of birth (native-born, foreign-born)
		• Citizenship (native citizen, foreign citizen)
			• Form of exploitation
			• Sector of exploitation
			• Provision of residence status as trafficking in person (TIP) victim
			• Accompanied/ unaccompanied (if minors)
				• Admin (Court/ Police, Ministry of Labour),
				• Specialised surveys
				• TIP Taskforces

Flow	• Annual number of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) cases by status: • 1: Confirmed (as decided/recorded by the organisation collecting data) • 3: Suspected (being processed/under investigation/pending decision) • 4: Not pending • 5: Unknown	• Age • Sex • Place of birth (native-born, foreign-born) • Citizenship (native citizen, foreign citizen)	• Form of exploitation • Sector of exploitation • Provision of residence status as trafficking in person (TIP) victim • Accompanied/ unaccompanied (if minors)	• Admin (Court/ Police, Ministry of Labour), • Specialised surveys • TIP Taskforces
	Annual number of victims identified **Annual number of perpetrators identified**	• Age • Sex • Place of birth (native-born, foreign-born) • Citizenship (native citizen, foreign citizen)	• Form of exploitation • Sector of exploitation • Provision of residence status as trafficking in person (TIP) victim • Accompanied/ unaccompanied (if minors)	• Admin (Court/ Police, Ministry of Labour), • Specialised surveys • TIP Taskforces

Remittances: The last area to be covered by the additional indicators concerns remittances received and remittances as a share of the GDP.

Table 4.5. Additional key migration indicators measuring Remittances

Category/theme	Indicators	Topics for disaggregation	Sources
Remittances	**Remittances received, in USD** **Remittances as % of GDP**	• Country of origin (sending) • Year of transfer	• Central Banks • Surveys

4.3 Temporary Mobility

An important part of the UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility is the distinction between international migration and temporary mobility. This distinction is grounded in the concept of the "resident population" as defined in the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Rev. 4. Countries are advised to apply either a 6-months-and-1-day threshold or a 12-month threshold to determine whether an individual who has entered the country qualifies as a resident. Persons who do not meet this threshold are not considered part of the resident population but are instead part of the temporary (or non-resident) population.

Countries are encouraged to select the threshold that best reflects their national context, taking into account the levels and patterns of mobility, while also maintaining consistency with historical statistical practices to ensure data comparability over time.

Temporary mobility can encompass a wide range of reasons for movement, including:

- Temporary or cross-border work
- Education opportunities
- Healthcare
- Asylum seekers awaiting a decision or refugees in transit

For operational purposes, tourism and business travel are excluded from the statistical framework of the UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility and are considered separate from other types of international temporary mobility, as there are dedicated standards for statistics on tourism[27].

Temporary mobility can be measured as both a stock—the number of non-residents present at a specific time and national citizens temporarily absent from a country—and as a flow, by measuring the number of foreign citizens entering the country temporarily or residents departing the country for temporary stays abroad, over a defined period, such as a year. As such, this includes outflows for people who are part of the resident population in the country of origin.

Statistics related to temporary mobility are considered non-core and should be disaggregated, where possible, by age, sex, citizenship status, country of birth, reason for movement and duration of stay. The primary sources for these data are typically administrative records, although censuses and specialised surveys can be used when conducted at regular intervals and designed to capture these types of short-term movements.

27 https://www.unwto.org/tourism-statistics/standards

Table 4.6. Additional key migration indicators measuring further details of Temporary Mobility

Category/ theme	Migration statistics / indicator	Primary topics for disaggregation	Data source
Stock	**Number of foreign citizens temporarily present in the country who are** • cross-border workers • engaged in seasonal work • other types of employment • engaged in training or education • seeking health-related treatments asylum seekers/refugees **Number of national citizens temporarily absent from the country who are** • cross-border • workers engaged in seasonal work	• Sex • Age • Duration of stay	Census Survey Admin data
Flow	**Annual number of foreign citizens entering the country temporarily for:** cross-border workers • engaged in seasonal work • other types of employment • engaged in training or education • seeking health-related treatments • asylum seekers/refugees	• Sex • Age • Duration of stay	Census Survey Admin data
	Annual number of residents departing the country for temporary stays abroad (foreign citizens, citizen population)	• Sex • Age • Expected duration of stay • Country of final destination of stay • Country of final • destination	

Data Sources for Statistics on Migration and Displacement

CHAPTER

5

The main data sources for migration and displacement statistics are population censuses, sample surveys, registers and administrative records. The data sources can be categorised by method of data collection. The data collection in censuses and sample surveys is performed by means of interviews, while the data collection from registers and administrative records is a retrieval operation of existing data. Another way of categorising the sources is by type of data collected. Data from censuses, registers and administrative records are mainly counts of migrants for stock-taking, with data from registers and admin records being mainly for operational/administrative purposes, while data from sample surveys are analytic data collected with the purpose of in-depth studies of migration dynamics and patterns, the drivers of migration, and the socioeconomic impacts on migrants.

5.1. Data Collection in Censuses

The population census is the main source for collecting data on international migrants and their characteristics in AU Member States, and is still the only source of statistics on international migrant stock for many of the countries.

Two migrant-related topics measured in the census—country of citizenship and country of birth—form the basis for the identification of the immigrant stock. Four subgroups of the resident population can be identified from the variables country of citizenship and country of birth:

- native-born citizens
- native-born foreign citizens (including stateless or those without citizenship)
- foreign-born citizens
- foreign-born foreign citizens (including stateless or those without citizenship).

To capture international migration movements, some additional variables are needed. The table below shows the basic set of census variables for the estimation of international migration.

Table 5.1. Census variables for estimation of international migration

Variable	Description
Country of birth	Country of birth may refer to either the country in which the mother was usually residing at the time of the person's birth or the country where the physical birth actually took place.
Country of citizenship	A citizen is a legal national of the country of enumeration. A non-citizen may be a foreign citizen (i.e. a citizen of another country), or a stateless person or a person with unknown or undetermined citizenship status.
Year or period of arrival	The calendar year and month of arrival in the country of enumeration of any person who has been resident abroad. This information enables the calculation of the number of completed years between the time of arrival in the country and the time of the census date.
Place of residence at a specified date in the past	The major or smaller division, or the foreign country, in which the individual resided at a specified date preceding the census. The reference date is, in most cases, one year or five years preceding the census.
Ever resided abroad	Focuses on all persons who have ever resided outside the current country of usual residence, regardless of country of birth or citizenship. Countries may choose to collect information on this topic from (a) citizens only; (b) native-born persons only; or (c) all persons.

Depending on the specific information needs of the Member State, other variables may be included in addition to the core variables. Examples are the variables *main reason for international migration, acquisition of citizenship and country of birth of parents*.

Statistics on Migrant Stock based on Census Data

The most basic statistics produced from census data are those on numbers and proportions of the total stock. Examples are:

- Total number of foreign-born persons by sex and age (stock of foreign-born)
- Total number of foreigners (non-citizens) by sex and age (stock of foreigners)
- Percentage of foreign-born population that are citizens of the country of residence
- Percentage of citizens that are foreign-born

Depending on what migrant-related topics are included in the census, other important statistics may be produced from census data. Examples are:

- Total number of returning migrants by sex and age
- Percentage of returning migrants whose main reason for returning is retirement
- Percentage of returned migrants with employment experience abroad
- Total number of second-generation migrants (native-born persons with foreign-born parents)
- Percentage of the total population that are second-generation migrants
- Percentage of second-generation migrants that hold foreign citizenship
- Percentage of foreign-born persons aged 15 or over in the labour force
- Labour force participation rate among foreign-born persons aged 15 or over
- Employment to population ratio among foreign-born persons aged 15 or over
- Unemployment rate among foreign-born persons aged 15 or over
- Distribution of employed foreign-born persons by detailed occupation (2-digit)
- Distribution of employed foreign-born persons by detailed branch of economic activity
- Employed persons by country of place of work

Statistics on Migration Flows Based on Census Data

Census data can be used to produce rough estimates of international migration flow for specific periods, ending with the time of the census.

- Net immigration for the intercensal period. This statistic can be calculated by using census data on the total population, taking into account births and deaths that occurred during the intercensal period.
- Estimate of immigrant flows. This statistic can be produced if a question on place of residence at a specified time in the past (e.g. 1 year or 5 years before the census) is included. This allows the calculation of the number of international migrants who arrived during the period and remained in the country until the time of the census.

Limitations/Problems in Measuring International Migration in a Census

A major shortcoming of census data is that they are only collected once every 10 years. Consequently, they cannot capture the current trends in international migration in a timely manner. The data collected are raw counts of migrant stock and a rather limited number of variables on migration events. These data do not allow a meaningful analysis of the causes or consequences of international migration. Furthermore, because censuses capture only people in the country at the time of the census, they cannot provide a complete or detailed characterisation of international flows of people especially of emigration.

Furthermore, there is little consensus when it comes to the measurement of emigration because, in cases where entire households emigrate, there is nobody left behind to report this. It is often better to measure emigration through administrative sources (e,g. by using "signs of life" studies) or by assessing the censuses of receiving countries.

There are coverage problems as well. Census under-enumeration is always a problem, and may be significant in some censuses. Under-enumeration of migrants is often greater than in the case of the general population, especially when migrants have a vested interest in not being counted.

Also, the coverage of refugees in population censuses varies between countries. Refugees may, or may not, be included in the census enumeration. In the UN's Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, the recommendations very explicitly and unequivocally address the inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs in census data collection. Unless explicitly asked, it is difficult to identify refugees. Although the recommendation is to ask about the reasons for migration and to apply reasons related to violence as well as racial or religious intolerance to potential refugees, it is well known that people have multiple reasons for migration. Guidance on how to include persons in need of international protection, persons with refugee background and persons returned from abroad after seeking international protection in censuses is provided in Use Case A of the EGRISS Compilers' Manual, including a list of questions for the identification of refugees.[28]

The distinction between international migration and temporary mobility must be made. Linked to this is the concept of place of residence, which was discussed in Chapter 2. People who cross a border without intending to change their country of residence or who do not meet the time criteria to indicate a change of residence are not migrants, rather they are referred to as temporary mobile and contribute to the non-permanent population.

Textbox 3. Morocco: National example of efforts to improve coverage of migrants in the census.

As part of the 7th General Population and Housing Census (2024), Morocco's High Commission for Planning (HCP), in collaboration with agencies of the United Nations system, implemented an inclusive approach to better capture migration dynamics at the national level. Over 100 migrants and refugees were mobilised as community focal points to facilitate communication, build trust and support census agents in their outreach to the concerned communities. This initiative strengthened the inclusion of migrant populations in the statistical process, ensured comprehensive coverage of migration data and generated reliable information to guide evidence-based public policies.

5.2. Data Collection in Sample Surveys

Population censuses collect data that are relevant for the characterisation of international migrants, but the information gathered is too limited to allow in-depth analysis of the determinants and consequences of international migration. The strength of a household sample survey is the wealth of information that can be gathered. The survey questionnaire can go much wider in content and deeper in detail than can be done in the census questionnaire.

Data on migrants and migration may be collected with the use of a migration module in existing regular household surveys, or in a specialised (household-based) migration survey. Migration data can also be collected in sample surveys that are not based on the sampling of households. Examples are border crossing surveys and surveys of refugees.

28 More in EGRISS Compilers' Manual, a technical guidance document complementing EGRISS Recommendation and providing hands-on guidance for practitioners https://egrisstats.org/activities/compilers-manual/

Migrant Module in a Regular Household Sample Survey

To a varying degree, all African countries conduct regular surveys focusing on e.g. labour force, fertility/health and income/expenditure. In some cases, it may be possible to include a module on migration in such surveys. Examples of surveys with migrant modules conducted in African countries are: Demographic and Health Survey (DHS; the impact of migration on family health and living conditions); labour force surveys (employment-related migration, seasonal or temporary migration for work, and labour market integration of migrants); Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS; international and internal migration, economic impact of remittances, and migration as a livelihood strategy); household budget surveys (economic impact of migration, remittances as a source of household income, and changes in household consumption patterns due to migration).

However, the sample design for these surveys is based on the national population and is not representative of migrant populations. As much as migration modules are a good intervention, other interventions that better represent migration should be pursued.

Textbox 4. Kenya: National example of discrepancies that might sometimes occur between censuses and household surveys.

During the 2024 Kenya Housing Survey (March–June 2024), conducted by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), the estimated stock of international immigrants was significantly lower than the figures reported in the 2019 Population and Housing Census. This discrepancy raised concerns about the comparability of migration data across statistical instruments.[29].

When considering the inclusion of a migrant module in a survey, the size of the sample must be addressed. One problem with many of the surveys is that their sample sizes are too small to yield statistically reliable data on international migrants. The migrants' share of the population is often less than 2 per cent. The typical size of most nationally representative household surveys is in the range of 5,000 to 10,000 households. If the average household size is 4, the expected number of international migrants in the sample would range from 400 to 800. Estimates for subgroups, for example recent migrants, will have large standard errors, making any conclusions and analysis from the data unreliable.

It is recommended that a migrant module is only used in surveys with large sample sizes carried out in countries with significant proportions of international migrants. Otherwise, the small numbers of migrants likely to be selected for the sample will not justify the expense.

Specialised Sample Surveys of Migrants and Migration

Specialised sample surveys on international migration are tools for more in-depth studies of migrants and migration. The surveys may address topics such as labour migration, forced migration and return migration. They can provide valuable data for understanding migration dynamics and patterns, the drivers of migration, as well as the socioeconomic impacts on migrants and their communities. Many of the African surveys conducted to date have focused on migration to Europe and Middle East. A few have focused on cross-border migration from neighbouring countries.

Specialised migrant surveys have the same problem in respect of sample size as the regular household surveys. To secure a sufficient sample size, special sample designs like two-phase sampling must be employed. Using such techniques, it may

29 https://statistics.knbs.or.ke/nada/index.php/catalog/184

in some cases be possible to over-sample migrant households and, thus, secure a sufficient sample size. Conducting a specialised migration survey will be much more expensive than adding a migration module to a regular survey.

Countries may also collect data on refugees either by including them in regular surveys or by conducting refugee-specific surveys. Key considerations include the use of appropriate refugee identification and classification questions as well as adapted sampling frames. Further guidance on these issues is provided in Use Case B of the EGRISS Compilers' Manual.

Textbox 5. Benin: National example of specialised sample surveys of migrants and migration.

In 2020, the National Institute of Statistics and Demography (INStaD) of Benin conducted the second edition of the Migration Survey (EMB2), with financial support from the European Union. The survey was carried out in two complementary phases:

- Phase 1 – Quantitative: Collection of statistical data on migration flows, migrant profiles, household conditions, motivations, future intentions and social integration.
- Phase 2 – Qualitative: Interviews with municipal authorities and local stakeholders to gather strategic insights for the development of tailored migration policies. This phase was deemed necessary following the quantitative component, as municipal authorities and other local actors play a key role in migration management and can provide essential information for designing effective policies and programmes. Additional qualitative data were therefore collected from them within their respective municipalities.

This mixed-method approach enabled the production of robust indicators and in-depth analyses on the drivers and impacts of migration

Border Crossing Sample Surveys

Rather than households, some international migration surveys focus on persons who cross or are about to cross international borders. A major problem in using data from border crossing at exit/entry points is the sheer volume of movements that take place, the vast majority for purposes other than to change residence. The surveys must be designed to secure a sufficient sample of migrants.

Data Quality Issues

As discussed, estimates from sample surveys are subject to sampling errors. Estimates of the total migrant stock based on a household sample will be unreliable due to large sampling errors when the household sample is small. Samples of less than 5,000 households cannot produce useful estimates.

In addition to sampling errors, there are errors due to non-coverage and non-response. Sampling frames (household lists) based on a census that is more than one year old will introduce coverage bias in the estimates. Coverage bias may also be a problem in the case of a migrant module in an existing survey. The target population for the existing survey may differ from the adequate target population for the migrant module. A typical example is when the target population for the existing survey excludes the refugee population.

Migrant households may be more susceptible to non-coverage than other households, even when they are correctly included in the target population and the sampling frame based on the target population. Also, the non-response rate may be higher among migrant households.

5.3. Data Collection from Registers

Population Registers

A population register is a data system continuously recording information on each member of the resident population of a country. Population registers are modified continuously by current information. The population register covers only the de jure population that have the right to legal residence in a country. The register contains variables such as births, deaths, marriages, divorces and changes of residence. The variable change of residence is the main variable for measuring international migration.

A few AU Member States have systems in place that serve the function of a population register. Other countries are in various stages of developing such systems through national ID programmes and the digitalisation of civil registration.

As part of national efforts to support the AU Pan-African identity goal, several Member States are prioritising the establishment of national registration systems, which serve as the national population registry. Countries such as Ghana, Kenya and Liberia have national laws requiring all residents to obtain national ID cards (both citizens and non-citizens). In Liberia, the government issued an executive order requiring that all refugees and vulnerable populations be issued with national ID cards at no cost. The challenge in having fully developed population registers in most AU Member States is the low coverage of the rural population. Developing targeted programmes to ensure that the rural population receives free access to national ID cards will accelerate the development and functionality of the population registers.

Textbox 6. Namibia: National example of maintaining population registers.

Namibia, through its Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security (MHAISS), operates a functional and digitalised population registration system that records key vital events: births, marriages and deaths. It also manages the identity of the population.

The system's functionalities and features:

- Web-based and decentralised. Integrated with electronic notification of birth and death systems.
- Contains biometric data which enables identity verification.
- Supports social protection programmes and enables planning.
- Backed by legal frameworks (Birth, Marriages and Deaths Registration Act, Identification Act, Marriage Act, Aliens Act).
- Developed by the Office of the Prime Minister and fully owned by the Government.
- Subject to continuous improvement in collaboration with key stakeholders, i.e. the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Health and Social Services, the Ministry of Justice and Labour Relations, the Office of the Judiciary and the Namibia Statistics Agency.
- Used by the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) to produce regular vital statistics reports and causes of death reports.

This system exemplifies regional good practice in civil registration and identity management, with ongoing modernisation and strong institutional coordination[30].

30 https://nsa.org.na/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Report-on-Mortality-and-Causes-of-Deaths-in-Namibia-2018-2021.pdf

The maintenance of the registers includes registration and deregistration. For the purpose of measuring international migration, the registration of changes of residence is the main focus of attention. The identification of international migrants depends on the rules in place to determine who should be inscribed in or deregistered from the population register.

The quality of the register is an issue in some countries. The register relies on the systematic reporting and registration of birth, death and migration events. One problem often encountered in the operation of population registers is that persons who are registered are reluctant to report (deregister) when they leave the country for an extended period. Moreover, population registers may sometimes exclude some populations, especially undocumented migrants and forcibly displaced persons. Stateless persons will be missed by the register.

Textbox 7. The information in a national population register usually contains:

- Personal identification (unique ID, name, sex/gender, date of birth, place of birth, nationality or citizenship).
- Demographic and civil status (marital status, date and place of marriage/divorce/death).
- Migration and residence (place of usual residence, previous address, date of move, country of origin/destination).
- Legal status (citizenship history, asylum/refugee status if applicable).

Registers of Foreigners

A register of foreigners is a form of population register that only includes persons who are not citizens of the country in which they reside. The register has the advantage of recording fairly detailed information on the specific type of permit under which foreigners are admitted and reside in a country.

A few AU Member States have established systems to register and manage information about foreign nationals. Other countries are in the process of enhancing their capabilities to monitor and regulate the presence of foreigners, often by integrating these systems with border management and national security measures.

One quality problem is the fact that registers of foreigners tend to under-estimate the level of emigration of resident foreigners, since reporting a long-term departure to the authorities in charge of the register often may result in the revocation of the residence permit.

Textbox 8. The information in a national register of foreigners usually contains

- Personal identification (name, sex/gender, nationality, personal data and biometric data).
- Immigration status and legal basis (type of residence permit or visa, permit number, date of issuance and expiry, legal basis for stay).
- Residency and movement (date of entry, date of exit (if applicable), intended duration of stay, place of residence, border post or port of entry).
- Administrative and legal information (registration status, employer or educational institution (if applicable), changes in immigration status (extensions, renewals, revocations), legal actions (e.g. deportation orders, appeals)).

Textbox 9. Kenya: Kenya has established a modern digital portal that enables centralised and efficient management of services for foreign nationals.

Kenya operates a sophisticated digital platform known as the Foreign Nationals Management System (eFNS), managed by the National Registration Bureau. This system facilitates the tracking and management of key migration documents, including work permits, residence permits, alien cards, special passes and citizenship applications.

Accessible online via the official eFNS portal, the platform offers:

- Streamlined application processing
- Real-time status tracking and notifications
- Secure payment options (credit card, mobile money, bank transfer)
- Integration with the national eCitizen portal for unified access to government services

The system is backed by robust legal frameworks, notably the Kenya Citizens and Foreign Nationals Management Service Act, and is fully integrated with national identity systems—enhancing transparency, efficiency and migration governance.[31]

Asylum and Refugee Registers

Asylum and refugee registers are essential administrative data sources for generating statistics on displaced populations. These registers typically include detailed information on individuals applying for asylum or granted refugee status, such as demographic characteristics, country of origin and legal status. They serve as a primary source for estimating the stock of asylum seekers and tracking the flow of new asylum applications or decisions. However, their scope may vary across countries, and they often exclude displaced individuals outside formal registration systems, such as those in informal settlements or unregistered applicants. Additionally, during periods of mass displacement, the quality of these registers may be affected by delayed or incomplete registrations, resource constraints, and double entries due to language or procedural inconsistencies. Despite these challenges, asylum and refugee registers remain a vital tool for policymakers and statisticians in understanding displacement trends and developing evidence-based responses.

31 https://fns.immigration.go.ke

Other Registers

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, defines a crime and establishes an international protection framework for victims of trafficking. Consequently, most member states have procedures for the formal identification and recognition of a victim status and rights. These records will usually be held within one primary government register and provide a unique window onto the crime.

Some Member States maintain registers of returned migrants. Specifically, North African countries are increasingly becoming destination points for migrants from other parts of Africa. In response, they are developing migration management systems, which include the registration of incoming and returning migrants, to address the evolving migration dynamics.

Several Member States have established formal mechanisms to engage with and register their diaspora populations. These initiatives aim to strengthen ties with current or former citizens living abroad and harness their potential contributions to national development.

Some of these registers maintained by the Member States are supported by international agencies. For example, with support of the UNHCR, governments maintain registers on asylum seekers and refugees for operational purposes and obtain statistics as a by-product.

5.4. Data Collection from Administrative Records

Continuous data on international migration can be found from the administrative procedures involved in controlling the admission and stay of foreigners. Migration statistics can be produced as a by-product of these administrative procedures.

A key difference between population registers or registers of foreigners and other administrative records is the statistical unit. In population registers and registers of foreigners, the person is the statistical unit, whereas in administrative records, the unit of data collection is typically the document or recorded event, not the individual.

A challenge with using administrative sources is that permits are sometimes issued not only to new foreigners arriving in a country, but also to those who have resided in the country for a period of time in relation to a renewal or change of visa types. As a result, the statistics generated from administrative records may not reflect the actual inflow of migrants.

The African Union, through the Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration (JLMP), has developed Guidelines for the Collection and Utilisation of Quality Administrative Data for Labour Migration Statistics in Africa[32].

The AU Guidelines on administrative data establish standardised data collection protocols and aim to improve administrative data integration across the continent. By leveraging administrative data to complement data collected from primary data sources (censuses, surveys, etc.), governments and regional bodies will be better equipped to manage labour migration and protect migrant workers.

32 The guidelines and toolkit have been validated and will be submitted to the STC SDLE in 2025 for endorsement and adoption, before publication.

Textbox 10. Somalia: First edition of Migration Statistics Report compiled from administrative data

In **2024**, the Somalia National Bureau of Statistics produced the first edition of its MIGRATION STATISTICS REPORT[33] using administrative data from various sources. The report compiles migration data from institutions such as the National Commission for Refugees and IDPs (NCRI), the Immigration and Citizenship Agency (ICA), the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA), and the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Migration, Returnees, and Children's Rights (OSPE)

Data on Residence Permits

Statistics derived from the issuance of residence permits can be used to provide two types of measures: those relating to stocks, which usually reflect the number of valid residence permits at a given point in time, and those relating to the various flows that bring about changes in the stock.

However, if the procedures used in collecting data on residence permits make no distinction between permits issued for the first time, permit renewals and changes of status within the country (from non-resident to resident), their use for measuring migrant inflows is problematic.

Data on Work Permits

Foreigners wishing to engage in an economic activity must obtain official permission to do so before they enter the country. Work permits can be renewed when certain conditions are met.

The number of new work permits issued is a measure of the size of the inflow of migrant workers. The number of valid work permits is a measure of the stock of migrant workers. It is important to distinguish between renewals and new permits. Data on the number of work permits should be compiled by type (first-time permit versus renewal) and by duration of permit. The permits can provide information on e.g. job characteristics and employer characteristics.

The data do not reflect the economic activity of foreigners without work permits.

Border Statistics

Border statistics are derived from the collection of information at points of entry into a country and at points of departure from a country. This has the advantage of reflecting actual moves with a high degree of accuracy in terms of timing, mode of transport and place.

There are challenges associated with identifying migrants at the border. Declared intentions are often used to distinguish international migrants from other travellers, but the intention may not be the actual outcome. Passports indicating citizenship and the requirement for holding special types of visas or permits are another way of identifying migrants, particularly among foreigners. Citizens returning after living abroad for a time may be more difficult to identify. A general problem relates to separating migrants from tourists. It is not possible to distinguish between migrants and tourists when the intention of entry and the duration of stay are not known. It should also be noted that tourism has its own statistical framework.

33 https://nbs.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Migration-Statistics-Report-2024.pdf

A weakness of border-crossing statistics is that many borders are porous, with significant movements across the border outside border posts.

There are examples of RECs collecting administrative data from the countries on cross-border movements, and developing systems for data management, as part of monitoring the free movement of persons at the REC level.

The EAC Secretariat, for example, collects data biannually through the East Africa Monitoring System (EAMS) for use in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Protocol for the establishment of the Common Market by the Partner States. The data is collected through the National Implementation Committee (NIC), which collects these data routinely in its administrative processes. The NIC members upload the data directly to the EAMS, and the EAC Secretariat undertakes a final compilation and validation round at each Partner State before using the data.

5.5. Emerging Data Sources

Mobile phone data and data from internet tools and platforms, such as social media or online payment services, represent potential sources of data for studies of migration patterns. The huge volume of data generated automatically by such sources has given rise to the name "big data". The use of big data is emerging as a complementary approach to traditional methods, but the practice is still in its early stages on the continent.

The sources of big data can be classified under two categories: 1) Mobile phone communication services (calls and text messages) and financial services (mobile money transfers), and 2) Internet-based activities (including the use of search engines, logins to websites, use of social media and online money transfers).

The most advanced use of big data for migration studies is currently based on call detail records (CDRs). CDRs are anonymised digital records that are collected by mobile network operators every time a network subscriber makes a call. Such records include information about the approximate location of the caller and receiver. CDR data make it possible to analyse call data to understand mobility and migration trends within and across borders. CDR data have been used in some African countries for studies of migration.

Another promising field is the use of data generated by social media platforms. The data can be analysed to identify migration intentions and trends, particularly regarding emigration. These data are often used in combination with survey data to enhance the understanding of migration drivers.

The benefits of using big data are obvious. Big data provides rapidly available information with high granularity, which is useful for monitoring migration during emergencies and for tracking migration patterns at a very granular level.

There are obstacles to the use of big data, however. The use of mobile and social media data raises privacy and data security concerns. Gaining access to high-quality data from private companies can be challenging and costly, and data-sharing agreements are necessary. Furthermore, the analysis of big data is often difficult due to the enormous volume and complex nature of the data, with the result that adequate technical capacity must be available. There is also the matter of representativeness: a large sample is not necessarily representative of the entire population, due to the inherent self-selection bias of the data source.

Textbox 11. Senegal: Leveraging mobile phone data to understand temporary migration

Senegal conducted an innovative study using mobile phone data (2013-2015) from Sonatel (Orange Senegal) to generate statistics on internal temporary migration. This approach enabled the detection of movement patterns among millions of users over a three-year period.

Methodological advantages

Mobile phone data offers several benefits over traditional survey instruments:

- Continuous, granular and nationwide measurement of temporary migration.
- Reduced recall bias and lower data collection costs.
- While not randomly sampled, the data reflects a significant portion of the adult population in both rural and urban areas.

Key findings

- In 2015, approximately 3.6 million migration events lasting at least 20 days were recorded, involving nearly 29% of the adult population.
- The average duration of migration episodes was 50 days, with over 70% lasting less than two months.
- Migration flows were widely dispersed, connecting rural and urban areas. Dakar accounted for 23% of arrivals, while 63% of departures originated from rural zones. [34]

34 https://hellofuture.orange.com/en/leveraging-mobile-phone-data-to-understand-temporary-migration-in-senegal/

Methodological Aspects on Statistics on Migration and Displacement

CHAPTER

6

6.1 Definition of Immigrant – Different Practices among Countries

To be considered an immigrant to a country, a person must have been a resident of another country before entering and have established new residence in the country in a given year. This means residing—or intending to reside—in the country for at least 6 months + 1 day or 12 months (according to the revised UN Recommendations), depending of the rules of the country. Immigrants can be classified by country of birth and/or citizenship. The size of the immigrant stock will differ depending on which definition is used and the legislation of the country.

Table 6.1. Immigrant stock by country of birth and citizenship

	CITIZENSHIP	
Country of birth	**Citizens**	**Foreign citizens (foreigners)**
Native-born	**A. Native-born citizens.** **A1.** Immigrants: Citizens born in the country who emigrated and returned thereafter. **A2.** Non-immigrants: Citizens born in the country who never emigrated	**B. Native-born foreign citizens.** **B1.** Immigrants: Foreign citizen born in the country who emigrated and returned thereafter. **B2.** Non-immigrants: Foreign citizens born in the country who never emigrated
Foreign-born	**C. Foreign-born citizens.** Citizens born abroad who immigrated	**D. Foreign-born foreign citizens.** Foreigners born abroad who immigrated

Equating international migrants with foreign citizens when estimating the immigrant stock has significant shortcomings. For example, persons who were born abroad who were citizens or who naturalised in the current country of residence (C) are excluded from the stock of immigrants. Furthermore, foreign citizens born in the country who have never lived in another country (B2) are included in the stock of immigrants. Moreover, native-born citizens who have lived in another country and returned (A1) will not be included in any of the definitions.

Countries do not use the same definition of immigrant for official statistics. This situation is illustrated in the way AU Member States report the immigrant stock to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). Thirty-six countries report the number of foreign-born while 16 countries report the number of foreign citizens (International Migrant Stock 2020, UNDESA). The UN Recommendations define immigrant stock as all persons who reside in the country who are either born in another country or who do not hold national citizenship, including stateless persons, at a given point in time. Persons who are born in the country and have national citizenship are not considered part of the immigrant population (stock), although they can be considered (recent) immigrants or part of the immigration flow if they returned and changed their country of residence.

The fact that countries do not use the same operational definition is a problem when summarising immigrant stocks for all African countries or for all countries in an REC. The difference between the stock of foreigners and the stock of foreign-born persons is substantial in some African countries. This is an issue that must be addressed when the purpose is to present immigrant stocks aggregated to regional and continental level.

***To consider**. Census/survey questionnaires and register forms should ideally include both citizenship and country of birth. NSOs that currently use only the citizenship definition should consider including country of birth in the questionnaires. When aggregates of Member States are computed, special care must be taken of the data from Member States using the citizenship definition. This may entail a crude assessment of the difference between the number of foreign citizens and the number of foreign-born persons in the country.*

6.2 Counting Immigrants – The Main Data Sources

Population census. The census is still the only source of international migration statistics for many of the AU Member States. However, there are general problems of coverage (see aspect 3) and certain categories of migrants are especially susceptible

to not being enumerated. One specific problem is the coverage of refugees. In countries where refugees have been granted refugee status and allowed to integrate, including naturalisation, they have normally been covered by the population census. In many countries, however, refugees are required to reside in camps or other designated areas. In these cases, population censuses could have ignored refugees. This may have been an issue in the past. The Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses Revision 4 (Version 31 March 2025) state that "Refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (in and outside camps) should be enumerated in both the population present count, and in the usual resident count if they meet the established duration criteria".

Since censuses are generally carried out only once every decade, they cannot capture the current trends in international migration in a timely manner (see aspect 5).

Household Sample Surveys. Most household sample surveys use the most recent census as the sampling frame from which the first stage area sample is selected. The listing of households in selected areas follows the same procedure as in the census. As a result, the sample surveys have the same coverage problems as the census.

Register of Foreigners. Registers of foreigners can be used to obtain statistics on the number of foreigners who are residing legally in the country at a given point in time. The inflow/outflow of foreigners into and out of a country during a period ((usually one calendar year) can be measured if the register is updated regularly. However, there are general coverage problems due to deficiencies in registration and deregistration procedures in most countries. The registers of foreigners tend to under-estimate the level of emigration of resident foreigners, since reporting a long-term departure to the authorities often results in the revocation of the residence permit that the foreigner holds. Also, some foreigners, especially undocumented migrants, do not register due to fear of deportation. Many countries maintain separate databases for asylum seekers and refugees. Moroever, such registers are usually not updated with deaths of foreigners.

Data Collection at the Border. Border control procedures record information on all persons arriving in and departing from the country via official border posts. The task of identifying immigrants and emigrants among all arriving and departing persons requires legal documents, through which the status of the person is established (e.g. passports, visas and residence permits), as well as statistical forms (embarkation and disembarkation cards). The identification of migrants among travellers is a task that currently is not within the available resources of many African countries. The situation is improved with the introduction of new biometric-based digitalised systems such as the MIDAS Border Management Information System.

In addition to population censuses, household surveys and registers of foreigners, the EGRISS Compilers' Manual (Use Cases A–C), IRRS and IRIS highlight the importance of administrative data sources such as asylum and refugee registers, camp registration systems and IDP tracking mechanisms. These sources can provide timely, regularly updated figures, often with demographic details, but may omit displaced persons living outside formal settlements or without registration. To address the gaps, IRRS and IRIS recommend combining administrative data with household surveys—either by integrating displacement status questions into national surveys or by implementing dedicated surveys of displaced populations.

To consider. *It is important that designers of migration statistics systems are aware of the coverage problems and that they assess the effects of these problems on the accuracy of the statistics produced by the system. Providing joint training of NSOs, immigration staff and border police on producing migration statistics using systems such as MIDAS should be encouraged.*

6.3 Errors in the Counts of Immigrants

Nationwide data collection in a census or a sample survey is a process where errors are bound to occur. Likewise, population registers and registers of foreigners are never perfect. The raw count from a census or a register that summarises the total population will at best be close to the true total and may in some cases be distinctly off the true total.

Errors that occur in all types of data collection and from all types of data sources, although to different extents. Four types of errors are common in data collected on immigrants:

- Coverage error. This error occurs when immigrants in the country are not counted in the census or are not included in the population register (see aspect 2). Immigrant households often have a higher net under-coverage rate than other households in a census or population register.
- Measurement (reporting) error. A household may misreport or mischaracterise the members of the household in census, sample survey or in register. The under-reporting of children is common.
- Non-response error. The respondent in the census or survey does not answer all the questions in the questionnaire. The question on place of birth often has a relatively high non-response rate.
- Sampling error. The results are uncertain because only a small proportion of the population is surveyed. The effect of sampling errors is lack of certainity whether—and by how much—a sample result is higher or lower than the true value. The effect is usually expressed as a confidence interval.

The effects of coverage errors and reporting errors are biased results. Estimation of the bias requires knowledge of the true population value and detailed knowledge of the census/survey processes. In practice, it is often possible to have an informed idea about whether the bias risk is upwards or downwards, but rarely possible to estimate its size accurately.

The sampling error is inversely proportional to the sample size. In some situations it is possible to "oversample" immigrant households by increasing the sample size. Oversampling increases the probability of immigrant households being included in the sample. Oversampling can be applied when it is possible to identify areas in the sampling frame that have a high concentration of immigrant households.

Surveys of forcibly displaced population present additional sources of error beyond those typically encountered in migration surveys. Displaced persons may be missed due to mobility, attempts to avoide official contact or residence outside designated settlements. Measurement errors can arise if respondents misunderstand legal categories tend to choose more socially acceptable responses to avoid stigma, while non-response may be higher in insecure or remote areas. Sampling errors can be significant where displaced populations are small or dispersed, although oversampling in known high-density areas—recommended in IRRS para. 165 and IRIS para. 202—can help mitigate this.

***To consider**. All official statistics publications on migrants should include a statement on the quality of the statistics. The statement should address possible biases in the statistics due to non-coverage and non-response. Sampling errors should always be estimated and presented in the statistics reports.*

6.4 Ways to Assess and Possibly Reduce Bias in the Counts of Immigrants in a Census

The fact that there is almost always an error (bias) in the total census count makes it essential to use methods to adjust the count. It is common to conduct a Post Enumeration Survey (PES). A PES is a small-scale survey conducted soon after the census date that seeks to identify who was, and was not, counted in the census. Net under-coverage rates are calculated from the PES and are used to adjust the census count.

An alternative, or complement, to the PES is to use demographic analysis to assess the under-coverage. Demographic analysis involves estimating the population using demographic data, such as birth and death records from national or local vital registration systems, immigration and emigration statistics, and other sources, and comparing these estimates to census counts.

PES and demographic analysis work well for the assessment of coverage problems concerning the total population and large population groups. Such assessments are less reliable for small population groups like the immigrant population, which often constitutes less than 3% of the population in African countries. To assess the coverage of immigrants in the census, additional information is needed. This involves the use of multiple data sources , such as registers of foreigners, administrative records and surveys to estimate the immigrant population. If an individual appears in one source but not the other, it suggests an undercount. A rough assessment of under-coverage consists of cross-checking the number of immigrants captured by a census with the total number of immigrants captured by administrative sources such as work permits, national registries and immigration systems.

***To consider**. The assessment and, possibly, the reduction of errors in the statistics on immigrants should be an integral part of the statistical system. There is still much work to do in this area for many African countries.*

6.5 Estimates of Immigrant Stock for Years for Which No Data Are Available

Most African countries rely exclusively on census data for estimations of the immigrant stock. However, the demands for statistics are often not congruent with the availability of census estimates. The government may need a baseline estimate of the immigrant stock for the national development plan for years for which census data are not available. Alternatively, an REC may want to present estimates of the total immigrant stock in the REC area for a specific year, but many Member States will not have census data for that year. The most radical demand relates to a full time series, i.e. a time series of annual estimates of the immigrant stock covering a longer period.

Projection Error

Estimation for years for which census data are not available involves an additional step in the estimation process. This entails the estimation of the change over time of the current census estimate to a future reference year or to a reference year prior to the year of the current estimate. The estimation of change requires a model of the change mechanism. Any model of the change mechanism is subject to error. A crude model based on scarce external information will have a larger error than an elaborate model based on rich external information. The error caused by deficiencies/crudeness of the model is a projection error. The projection error will bias estimates

for years for which data are not available. This bias will be "on top of" the bias already present in the estimate for the census/survey year. This bias is cumulative, i.e. it increases with the distance intime in years from the census year, because of compounding projection errors over time.

Intercensal and Postcensal Estimates of the Population

An established practice in many countries involves estimating the size of the population in intercensal years. Population projections are prepared after the census for following years. This is often done with the cohort component method, where age-specific estimates of fertility, mortality and international migration are used to project year-on-year changes in the population. In some cases, these projections (postcensal estimates) are reported as official estimates for the coming years, until the next census results become available.

Once the results of the next census are available, the previous postcensal estimates are adjusted to generate a consistent time series of intercensal population estimates for years between the past censuses. The basis for the adjustment is the "error of closure", i.e. the difference between the postcensal estimate (projection) for the (new) census year and the actual census result. This difference is distributed across the estimates for the intercensal period.

Intercensal and Postcensal Estimates of the Immigrant Stock

The demographic model for projections discussed in the previous section is not applicable when it comes to making projections of the immigrant stock for intercensal and postcensal years. It would be possible for a country with a perfect register of foreigners to use an accounting model to update the immigrant stock annually. Data on the annual inflow and outflows of foreigners combined with data on births and deaths in the stock of foreigners would provide an estimate of the change in the immigrant stock. However, such an accounting model is still beyond the available resources for most AU Member States.

In this situation, it is necessary to resort to much cruder models. An example is the estimates of immigrant stock produced by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) for all countries. The dataset International Migrant Stock 2020, published by UNDESA, provides estimates of the immigrant stock by age, sex and country of origin for the mid-point (1 July) of each year for: 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2020.

The model used by UNDESA is interpolation (for intercensal years) and extrapolation (for postcensal years). For countries with at least two censuses, interpolation or extrapolation is used to estimate the immigrant stock for the seven reference years from 1990 to 2020. For countries with only one data source, the growth rates of the immigrant stock in the relevant major area or region are used to estimate changes in the immigrant stock of a particular country. For countries or areas without any data sources, another country or group of countries is used as a model. Specific country circumstances such as sudden inward or outward migration due to conflict, economic booms or busts, and major changes in migration policies are also taken into consideration (UNDESA 2020).

***To consider**. Postcensal estimates and intercensal estimates of the general population and immigrant population are produced and published by international organisations, most notably by UNDESA. These estimates may differ from estimates published by NSOs when the UNDESA model used for the estimation differs from the NSO model. If the differences are substantial, the NSO must examine the models and be prepared to explain the reasons for the differences to the readers. (See also section 6.7)*

6.6 Census-Based Time Series of Immigrant Stock Do Not Reflect Year-on-Year Variations – But Are They Still Useful?

As discussed above, it is not possible to prepare intercensal and postcensal estimates of the immigrant stock of the same quality as those prepared for the total population. Population projections usually perform well within limited time horizons thanks to the demographic momentum and in situations with little variation in fertility and mortality. The immigrant stock is much more susceptible to unforeseen sporadic events that are impossible to replicate in the projections.

Due to the lack of external information, the projections will be rather crude linear or geometric extrapolations from the census year and interpolations for the intercensal years. The projections and intercensal estimates can be improved when external information is available. Such external information may come from sample surveys on migration, administrative data such as residence permits, border registrations, media reports etc. The use of external information is especially important in times of migration shocks due to wars and civil unrest.

It is usually not possible to estimate reliable changes in the size of the immigrant stock from an existing regular household sample survey (e.g. LFS, DHS, HIES). The sample size of the surveys is typically around 5,000-15,000 households. The power of the sample to detect changes of the immigrant stock is low in such surveys.

The intercensal and postcensal estimates of the immigrant stock will—in the absence of good external information—not reflect year-on-year variations in the immigrant stock in a reliable manner. It is questionable whether routinely produced year-on-year intercensal and postcensal estimates are useful in situations characterised by fairly stable migratory conditions. However, in years of strong migratory movements due to e.g. wars, civil unrest and major changes in migration policies, it is increasingly important to estimate the changes in immigration. This will require extraordinary efforts to gather data about the situation.

***To consider**. The population census is valuable as a 10-year benchmark, but cannot capture migratory movements shorter periods. Regular sample surveys have analytic value, but cannot be used estimate the total stock of immigrants due to small samples. Data from registers and administrative records offer the best potential for monitoring the development of the immigrant stock and dynamic migratory movements. This is an underdeveloped area in some NSOs. The long-term strategy for NSOs must be to invest in systems capturing data from administrative records. In some countries, this may mean cooperation with other government agencies in developing and registers, such as registers of foreigners and border crossing registers. In other countries, it is a matter of improving existing registers. (See also chapter 7.)*

6.7 Comparing Estimates from Different Sources

Estimates of the immigrant stock of a country can be found in various publications, e.g. official statistics publications, including census and survey reports. Estimates of the immigrant stock by country are also found in public databases maintained by international organisations. The fact that estimates—which are supposed to measure the same thing—often differ substantially is a source of confusion for many users of the statistics.

There are several possible reasons for differences between estimates of the immigrant stock:

- The definitions of immigrant may differ. If the definitions are not the same, the estimates are not measuring the same characteristic. A definition based on citizenship produces a different estimate than a definition based on country of birth.
- There may be a difference in how refugees are counted in the two estimates.
- The questionnaires (census, survey or register form) may differ. Different phrasing of questions on migrant status produces different responses.
- There is a sampling error when one or both estimates are based on a sample.
- There may be estimator bias in the estimates when one or both estimates are based on a sample. Estimator bias occurs when the sample weights are not correctly calibrated to control totals (total population at the midpoint of the survey period).

In many countries, there is a considerable difference between the number of foreign citizens and the number of foreign-born. A first check when comparing two estimates of immigrant stock is to make sure that the definitions of immigrant are the same.

The coverage of refugees in censuses and surveys is uneven. In countries where refugees have been granted refugee status and allowed to integrate, they are normally covered by the census/survey in the same way as any other immigrant. In many countries, however, refugees lack freedom of movement and are required to reside in camps or other designated areas. For censuses, there is a clear recommendation to enumerate all refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons in and outside camps (Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses Revision 4 Version 31 March 2025). However, household-based sources generally exclude populations in collective living quarters, which impacts the coverage of refugees living in camps, migrants living in worker camps and similar groups.

Particular caution is required when comparing estimates from sample surveys. Each survey has its own questionnaire and survey procedures as well as sampling and estimation procedures. Comparisons are often inconclusive due to the low accuracy of the estimates caused by sampling errors , non-coverage and non-response bias.

The estimates in tables 6.2 and 6.3 below illustrate the comparability issues discussed here. The estimates of the working age immigrant stock recorded in censuses and surveys have been retrieved from the ILOSTAT database on International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS). Apart from censuses and surveys, the tables also include estimates of immigrant stock produced by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

Table 6.2. Ghana, estimated working age immigrant stock (thousands)

Year	Source	Foreign citizens	Foreign-born	Foreign-born including refugees and asylum seekers
2010	Census UNDESA	396	245	 255
2013	HIES*	191	178	
2015	LFS UNDESA	139	206	 341
2017	HIES	227	271	
2020	UNDESA			399
2021	Census	221	251	
2022	HIES	176	257	

* HIES= Household Income and Expenditure Survey

Table 6.3. Rwanda, estimated working age immigrant stock (thousands)

Year	Source	Foreign citizen	Foreign-born	Foreign-born including refugees and asylum seekers
2010	UNDESA			331
2014	HIES	22	352	
2015	UNDESA			381
2017	LFS	44	365	
2018	LFS	60		
2019	LFS	31		
2020	LFS	41	320	381
2021	LFS	22	259	
2022	Census	77	315	
2023	LFS	35	255	

To consider. *To understand two estimates of presumably the same population total (the immigrant stock) is to study the description of how the estimates were made, which all publications or databass should include.*

6.8 Sampling Errors. Deciding the Sample Size for Nationwide Surveys of Migrants and Migration

The decision on the sample size is one of the most important decisions to be made at the planning stage of a survey. The costs for interviewer work and travel make up a substantial part of the costs for the survey. The larger the sample, the larger the budget for the survey. The sampling errors of the estimates from the survey are inversely proportional to the square root of the sample size. The smaller the sample, the larger the sampling errors. Hence, the decision on sample size must consider both survey costs and confidence in the estimates. The sample size should ideally be set at a level that ensures that the central survey questions can be answered with high confidence (e.g. "Is there a significant difference in labour force participation between immigrants and non-immigrants?"). There are usually several important survey questions, and each question requires a different sample size. A compromise must therefore be reached. The domain (for example geographic level) of estimation or disaggregation should also be considered when deciding sample sizes.

The decision process is fairly simple when the survey is a new round of a regular survey or the most essential questions have been asked in similar surveys. In this case, it is a matter of evaluating the standard errors resulting from the sample size used for these surveys, as well as analysing the effects of increasing or decreasing the sample sizes. If no such information exists, it is necessary to resort to calculations based on estimates of binary characteristics (proportion, percentage). If there is a central survey question that is expressed as a proportion, it is possible to calculate the expected standard errors for various sample sizes. If p is the proportion of immigrant households in the population, for example, then the standard error for an estimate of p is:

$$s.e.(\hat{p}) = \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n \cdot RR}}$$

n is the number of households in the sample and *RR* is the response rate. If it is possible to make an informed guess of the approximate value of p, this value can be plugged into the formula and the anticipated standard error for different sample sizes of n households can be calculated. *RR* is the anticipated response rate for the survey.

This formula is only valid for simple random sampling (SRS) of households. In nationwide surveys, the sampling is always performed in two stages: the first stage is the sampling of small areas (often enumeration areas, EAs), while the second stage is the sampling of households in the selected areas. Sampling in two stages usually has higher standard errors than one-stage sampling with the same sample size. The design factor *(D)* measures the increase in standard errors due to two-stage sampling. When two-stage sampling is used, the standard error is calculated as:

$$s.e.(\hat{p}) = \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p}) \cdot D^2}{n \cdot RR}}$$

The design factor may be available from a previous survey. If not, a default value of 1.2 can be used.

Most nationwide surveys produce estimates for various subgroups. Estimates are usually presented for areas such as provinces and urban/rural domains. Estimates for subpopulations like men and women are often also made. Immigrant households constitute a subgroup of particular interest for surveys related to migrants and migration. The standard error for an estimate of ps for a subgroup is calculated as:

$$s.e.(\hat{p}_s) = \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}_s(1-\hat{p}_s)\cdot D^2}{n \cdot RR \cdot sg}}$$

where sg is the share of the subgroup in the population.

Example

An exemaple of a survey question is: What is the labour force participation rate among the heads of household in immigrant households in the country? This rate is assumed to be somewhere in the interval 0.6–0.8, so 0.7 may be used for the estimation. It is anticipated that the response rate RR will be around 0.95, based on experience from other surveys. From the latest census, it is known that one per cent of the households in the country are immigrant households (sg=0.01). If the design factor is not known, so the value 1.2 may be used. What is the anticipated standard error for a sample of 10,000 households selected from all households in the country?

$$s.e.(\hat{p}_s) = \sqrt{\frac{0.7(1-0.7)\cdot 1.2^2}{10000 \cdot 0.95 \cdot 0.01}} = 0.056$$

The confidence interval is: $0.7 \pm 1.96 \cdot 0.056$ which is: [0.59 – 0.81]. This is a fairly wide confidence interval, implying that a much larger sample would be needed to answer the survey question with sufficient certainty.

To consider*: The example illustrates the problem of achieving sufficient precision in estimates for small subgroups in a sample survey. Calculations of anticipated confidence intervals for different sample sizes should always be performed at the planning stage. Such calculations may result in the conclusion that estimates for some small subgroups, like immigrant households, require prohibitively large household samples for the survey. In surveys specifically dedicated to the study of migrants and migration, the potential to oversample immigrant households should be explored. Oversampling steers the sample to immigrant households, reducing the need for a large household sample.*

An excellent guide on sampling is the UN handbook Designing Household Survey Samples: Practical Guidelines, which can be found at:

https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/642835/files/Designing_household_survey.pdf

6.9 Ways to Get Sufficient Numbers of Migrants in the Sample – Oversampling of Migrant Households, Sampling of Hard-to-Reach Migrants

International migrants make up only one or two per cent of the population in most African countries. As a result, the migrants will be a very small proportion of the sample in national household sample surveys that use the standard sample design (stratified two-stage sampling). Increasing the total sample size in order to get a sufficient number of migrants in the sample is not a feasible option for most surveys. A better option is to modify the standard sample design. This modification includes steering the sample to migrant households, a method usually referred to as oversampling (of migrant households).

A modification of the standard design may not be sufficient in sample surveys of special subgroups of migrants, such as irregular (undocumented) migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and diaspora communities. These subgroups are harder to capture in ordinary household samples. In such cases, it is often necessary to resort to sampling methods where sampling is not performed randomly.

Oversampling of Migrant Households in a Nationwide Household Sample Survey

The standard sample design entails a first stage of sampling of small areas, usually census enumeration areas, and a second stage of sampling of households in the selected areas. The first stage areas are termed primary sampling units (PSU). The sample of households can be steered towards migrant households in two ways: 1) steer the sample of PSUs to areas/regions with high prevalence of migrant households, and 2) within selected PSUs, steer the sample to migrant households. Both methods are usually applied when the oversampling of migrants is essential. The process is as follows:

1. Classify PSUs according to the prevalence of international migrants and oversample PSUs with higher prevalence using stratified sampling

Stratification of the PSUs is usually done by the highest administrative area (province, region) and urban/rural. For oversampling, an additional stratification is needed where the PSUs are stratified by prevalence of migrant households. The usual ideal source is a (recent) census that included questions on migrant status of household members. The households in the PSUs can be classified as migrant and non-migrant households, and the proportion of migrant households in the PSU can be calculated for all PSUs. The PSUs can then be grouped into strata, e.g. strata with high, medium and low-proportion PSUs. Stratified sampling is used to select PSUs from each of the three strata. The sampling fraction should be the highest in the high-proportion stratum and lowest in the low-proportion stratum.

2. List all households in the selected PSUs and identify migrant households

A list of all households within the boundaries of the PSU is prepared. Enumerators visit all households and register the name and address of the head of household and whether any member is a migrant. It is important that the enumerators have a clear understanding of the definition of household for the survey and whether collective (institutional) households should be included in the survey.

3. Stratify the households in the PSU into migrant and non-migrant households

The households in the PSU are stratified into households with migrants and households without migrants. A stratified sample of households is prepared, where households with migrants have a much higher sampling fraction than households without migrants.

Non-random Sampling of Hard-to-reach Migrants

Two commonly used methods are snowball sampling and respondent-driven sampling (RDS).

Snowball Sampling

The sampling starts with the recruitment of one person belonging to the target group. This person indicates (recommends) persons who belong to the target group. These people are approached and, if possible, recruited to the sample. Each one of these persons indicates other persons in the group for inclusion in the sample, and so on.

One disadvantage with this method is the lack of representativeness of the sample, due to the non-random choice of the first and the subsequent persons. Persons with broad social networks may indicate a larger number of similar people to be included in the sample and, as a consequence, certain groups may be over-represented.

Respondent-driven Sampling (RDS)

This is a modification of snowball sampling. RDS consists of three steps

1. Seed selection: A small number of persons ("seeds") are selected from the target group. The seeds do not need to be chosen randomly.

2. Interviews and recruitment: The seeds complete the interview and receive a predetermined number of coupons that they can use to recruit other people like them (Wave 1). The recruits in Wave 1 then complete the interview process and recruit Wave 2. This referral chain continues until the desired sample size is reached.

3. Incentives: Participants receive two incentives: one for completing the interview, and one for each peer that is successfully recruited.

Once the sample has been recruited, statistical techniques have been developed to try to reduce biases in the estimates.

***To consider**: Oversampling should generally be applied in all specialised migration surveys. Oversampling may also be applied when a migrant module is added to a regular household survey, although in this case the option of oversampling must be discussed with and agreed to by the survey manager. One factor for the survey manager to consider is the increase in the standard errors resulting from oversampling. Standard errors of estimates for the subgroup ofmigrants will decrease due to oversampling of this group, but estimates for other subgroups and the general target population will increase.*

6.10 Migration Flows and Immigrant Stock

The dynamics of migration flows and immigrant stock

The relationship between migration flows and the immigrant stock is specified in the demographic accounting equation (somewhat simplified):

$$P_{t+1} = P_t + \underbrace{(I - E)}_{\text{Net migration}} + \underbrace{(B - D)}_{\text{Natural growth}}$$

where P_t=immigrant stock at time t; *I*=migrant inflow between time *t* and time *t+1*; *E*=outflow (emigration) of resident immigrants between time *t* and time *t+1*; *B* and *D* are births and deaths in the immigrant population between time *t* and time *t+1*.

The change in the immigrant stock between time t and time t+1 (P_{t+1}- P_t) is driven by the two migration flows (*I, E*) and the two "vital flows" (*B, D*). The flows differ in character. The migration flows may fluctuate considerably over time and are difficult to predict, while the number of births and deaths normally change slowly over time in a fairly predictive way.

The four terms *I, E, B* and *D* in the accounting equation are all subject to measurement errors. The net migration component (*I-E*) is the dominant component in the equation. The year-on-year variation is often relatively larger than the variation in the natural growth component (*B-D*). However, it is also the component with the larger measurement errors.

In principle, it is possible to use the equation to obtain successive annual updates of the estimates of the immigrant stock in the years following a census year, starting with the actual census count of the immigrant stock. In reality, however, the estimates of the immigrant stock will have rather large margins of error. The value of the accounting equation lies mainly in its potential as an analytical tool. It is especially valuable in situations characterised by rapid changes in the migration flows, when there is a need to assess the consequences of changes in the immigrant stock due to circumstances such as political conflicts, economic crises and major changes in migration policies. The equation may also serve as a model for "what-if"-simulations.

Measurement of Migration Flows

Population censuses and sample surveys have limitations when it comes to measuring flows. It is possible to obtain crude estimates of net international migration from census data for two consecutive censuses. However, reliable measurement of migration inflows and outflows over a period requires data collected through registers that record migration events occurring in the period.

Estimates of Net International Migration over the Intercensal Period

Net migration (inflow minus outflow) over the intercensal period is measured by calculating the difference between total population growth and natural growth over the period.

Net migration (immigration – emigration) = population growth-natural growth = (P_{t+10}–P_t) – (B–D).

Pt+10 is the total population at the time of the second census, and Pt is the total

population at the time of the first census. B is the total number of births that have occurred during the intercensal period, and D is the total number of deaths that have occurred during that same period.

If the numbers of births and deaths in the intercensal period are not available, then the natural growth must be estimated based on fertility and mortality patterns during the intercensal period. This is done by projecting the population observed in one census to the date of the next census using estimates of mortality and fertility for the intercensal period. The survival rates are usually derived from an existing life table. The estimate of natural growth may be subject to substantial error when births and deaths are calculated from fertility rates and life tables.

Estimates of International Migration Flows, Based on Register Data

Estimation of international migration flows requires data on migration events. A central population register can, if registration and deregistration processes work well, provide data on movements due to migration.

Very few African countries have fully functioning population registers, but most countries have administrative registers that cover specific groups of international migrants. Such registers can be used for measuring inflows and outflows for these groups. For example, the inflow of foreign migrant workers to a country may be taken from a register of work permits. Estimates of the full migration flows can, in some cases, be derived by modelling the relationship between the flows of the specific group of migrants and the complete group of migrants.

Border registration systems generate records of entries and exits. These records need to be linked to persons in order to get data on movements of persons, who may have one or more movements in a given year. A major challenge in using data from border registration is the sheer volume of movements that take place, mostly for purposes other than migration. It is difficult to distinguish migrants from other travellers. Declared intentions on the duration of stay are often used to identify international migrants, but the intention may not be the actual outcome. Arriving migrants can be identified through visas or permits in countries where such documents are required. Citizens returning after living abroad are more difficult to identify.

It is in principe possible to measure immigration and emigration flows in countries with a comprehensive border registration system that covers all border posts and has the capacity to track persons across their entries and exits.

***To consider**: Several African countries are beginning to present official statistics on migration flows—either regularly or through pilot projects. Some countries present partial or thematic flow statistics, such as labour migration flows to Europe and other continents, return flows and irregular migrant flows.*

Reliable information on migration flows is essential for capturing the dynamics of international migration in a year-on-year perspective. Most African countries are far from this situation. There is a great deal of development work ahead. Countries need to invest in the development of register-based statistics on migrants and migration flows.

6.11 Sample Surveys of Refugees and IDPs – Specific Methodological Problems

Sample surveys are an important data source for measuring the characteristics and living conditions of refugees and IDPs. Two types of surveys can be distinguished, depending on what type of sampling frame is used and how the sampling is performed:

- Surveys on a sample of individuals selected from an existing registers of refugees or IDPs. The surveys may have national coverage or be targeted at a regional or local level (settlements, camps).
- Surveys on a sample of households/individuals in a number of randomly selected small areas. The surveys are usually nationwide surveys following the principles of multistage sampling. This is the sample design of most regular household surveys (LFS, MICS, living standard surveys, household budget surveys, etc.)

Survey on a Sample from a Register-Based Sampling Frame

The sampling is performed from a sampling frame prepared from a register (list) that ideally covers the whole target population. The quality of the estimates from registers depends heavily on the quality of the register in terms of coverage of the target population. The main quality issues are:

- **Lack of a reliable sampling frame covering the whole population**. For refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs, there is usually no single, complete, up-to-date list of the population. Registries prepared by e.g. the government, UNHCR or NGOs are of the subject to coverage errors: they may miss unregistered people, double count those who register in multiple places, or include people who have moved or returned. Urban IDPs are especially "hidden" because they blend in with host communities and do not live in camps are included in databases.
- **Obsolete registers due to rapid mobility and high turnover**. Displaced populations move frequently—between camps, urban neighbourhoods, transit points or across borders. A frame that is accurate at the time of creation may be obsolete within days or weeks. Mobility increases non-coverage, inflates non-response and makes follow-up studies (panels) difficult.
- **Under-coverage of hidden and stigmatised population subgroups**. Some displaced people avoid registration out of fear (deportation, loss of work opportunities, stigma) or because of distrust. This creates systematic under-coverage of the most vulnerable subgroups (e.g. undocumented asylum seekers, survivors of sexual violence). Estimates based on lists or on surveys conducted in formal settings will therefore be biased toward those with more stable/legal status or better access to services.

In many situations, especially when the purpose is to produce national estimates, there are often no reliable registers available that can serve as a sampling frame. An area-based sampling frame needs to be created.

Survey on a Sample from an Area-Based Sampling Frame

The sampling is performed in at least two stages, where the first stage is sampling of small areas. These areas—the Primary Sampling Units (PSU)—are often equal to census enumeration areas (EAs). This is the sample design used in most nationwide household sample surveys covering the general population. These surveys mainly present estimates for rather large and widespread population subgroups. A general problem for a survey targeting very small and geographically clustered population subgroups—like migrants, refugees or IDPs—is to get a sufficient number of households from the target population in the sample (see also Aspect 9). Several methods are available, where the method to be used depends on the situation.

Oversampling of Small and Widespread Population Subgroups

The households/individuals in the population subgroup tend to be randomly scattered in the general population. A random sample of PSUs is selected. Household listing and screening for subgroup members are carried out in the selected areas. The households (including collective households) in the area are grouped in two strata: households with members of the subgroup and households without members of the subgroup. The first stratum gets a higher sampling fraction.

Oversampling of Small and Heavily Clustered Population Subgroups When There Is Information on the Locations of the Subgroup

Households/individuals in the population subgroup tend to be concentrated in groups (clusters) rather than being randomly scattered. If the locations in which refugees/IDPs reside are known, or can be determined, this information can be used to identify PSUs where many refugees/IDPs reside. The first stage of the sampling can then either include only those PSUs, or over-sample those PSUs by giving them higher inclusion probability.

This method was used in the 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in Georgia. The urban and rural areas in each of ten regions were defined as the sampling strata. Each major stratum (Region by Urban/Rural) was divided into two substrata containing IDP-PSUs and Non-IDP-PSUs respectively. PSUs where the IDP population makes up more than 48 per cent of the PSU population were defined as IDP-PSUs. A total of 1,320 households were selected in the IDP stratum, and 12,800 households were selected in the Non-IDP stratum. (https://mics.unicef.org/surveys)

Oversampling of Small and Heavily Clustered Population Subgroups when There Is No Prior Information on the Locations of the Subgroup

Adaptive Cluster Sampling (ACS) can be used in situations where the target population is rare and geographically clustered, and there is no good prior information on the locations of the subgroup. The households/individuals in the target population tend to occur in groups (clusters) rather than being randomly scattered. A random sample of areas (e.g. enumeration areas) may miss these clusters completely if there is no good prior information available of the locations of the clusters. In such situations, adaptive cluster sampling provides an efficient way of sampling. The steps in the sampling procedure are:

1. A random sample of PSUs is selected. A listing exercise is conducted in the PSUs, using a very brief set of questions to identify subgroup members. Nationality can be used as a proxy for refugee status.
2. If a PSU has a high concentration of the subgroup—above a pre-determined threshold such as 10%—the neighbouring PSUs (or one nearest neighbour PSU) are selected and listing is conducted. If any of these PSUs reach the threshold, the listing is extended to their neighbour PSUs.
3. This process continues until no more PSUs reach the threshold.
4. PSUs with high concentration of refugees are identified and the listing can be used as the sampling frame.

The effectiveness of the Adaptive Cluster Sampling approach relies on the settlement distribution of the subgroup. If the subgroup is settled in clusters with a sufficiently high concentration, Adaptive Cluster Sampling is a useful method to efficiently and effectively sample refugee populations. See also Section 6.9 where non-random sampling methods are discussed.

The *EGRISS Compilers' Manual* describes a survey on economic development and integration of refugee communities in Uganda and Ethiopia in which Adaptive Cluster Sampling was used.

Identification in the Field of Forcibly Displaced Persons

"Refugee", "asylum seeker" and "IDP" are legal/administrative categories that may be interpreted differently by agencies, governments and respondents. Identification by legal status can miss people who identify differently or who cross categories (e.g. an IDP who later crosses a border).

The EGRISS Compilers' Manual states: "Proper identification via the survey questionnaire should always be attempted when surveying forcibly displaced persons, even in cases where identification could be pre-assumed from the sampling frame, i.e. where a survey's sampling frame (or frame for a dedicated stratum of the survey) is assumed to consist purely of refugees and/or IDPs. Identification should always take place at the individual level. Being forcibly displaced is an individual-level, not a household-level characteristic, and heterogeneity within households exists".

EGRISS has published a *Methodological Paper on Identification of IDPs, Refugees and Related Populations in Household Surveys* (2023) which provides suggested question flows and discusses inclusion/exclusion risks.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance for forcibly displaced population estimates should follow the same principles as for general migration statistics, but with added attention to displacement-specific risks. Triangulation of survey results with administrative and operational sources (such as UNHCR or national IDP registers) is essential to validate high-level trends, especially during mass influxes when registers may lag or contain obsolete records. In household surveys, routine quality checks and comparisons with displacement registries can detect systematic gaps.

***To consider**: National Statistical Offices and regional partners that plan to conduct a survey on the forcibly displaced population should use the EGRISS Compilers' Manual on Forced Displacement Statistics for detailed operational options. The manual contains practical use cases for censuses, household surveys and administrative data sources, with real-world examples that can inform context-specific decisions.*

Migration Data Systems at National Level

CHAPTER

7

7.1 Migration Statistics Systems in African Countries – Large Variation in Overall Quality

The national migration statistics systems are the main vehicle for the production of national statistics on migrants and migration and the primary source of data for statistics aggregated to REC and AU level. There is considerable variation in the migration statistics systems among African countries in terms of:

- Comprehensiveness of statistics. The national data on migrants and migration to collect—and how to collect them—are decided by each country and depend on the information needs of the country.
- Use of data sources. All countries use census and survey data. The use of registers, administrative data and border registration data varies considerably between countries.
- Statistical focus. There are differences in the specific migration issues of interest. In some countries, the main concern is policy plans to attract skilled emigrants to return, while in others it may be migration flows or the number of refugees.
- Statistical capability. There are substantial differences in available human and financial resources between the Member States.

The overall quality of the migration statistics systems varies between countries. At the top end of the quality scale, there are countries with well-developed migration statistics systems, while at the bottom end there are countries with very rudimentary systems. The potential to aggregate national statistics to RECs and AU level is essentially defined by the quality and comprehensiveness of the statistics produced by countries with less developed migration statistics systems.

7.2 The Migration Statistics System as Part of the National Statistics System

The national statistics system (NSS) comprises the national statistics office (NSO) and all other producers of official statistics in the country. The system operates in the data ecosystem within a country, which includes not only those producing official statistics, but all producers and users of data. The NSO has a central role in the statistics system. It is often the main producer of official statistics in the country.

The National Statistics Office (NSO)

The organisation of the NSO depends on how the national statistics system is organised. The system may be centralised or partially/fully decentralised. The NSO is:

- the main producer of official statistics, working together with other government agencies engaged in official statistics;
- the leader and coordinator of the national statistical system, responsible for work related to the development, production and dissemination of official statistics in the national statistical system;
- the designated national representative in international statistical cooperation (including regional cooperation with the RECs and the AU).

The mandates and functions of the NSOs are normally stated in the statistical laws, including their operations and their place within the national administrations.

Migration Statistics System

The main actors in the migration statistics system are typically departments in ministries or agencies handling immigration and citizenships, labour market, passports and border control, as well as national ID cards.

The migration statistics system is a sector (domain) in the NSS (or, alternatively, a subsector in the population statistics system). As such, it operates alongside other sectoral statistics systems, such as national accounts, labour statistics and environmental statistics.

Migration statistics share the overall funding and resources of the NSS with the other sectoral statistics systems. Some of the other systems are well established and have strong users/producers of statistics within a line ministry. Examples include economy/finance, agriculture, education, labour and health. Migration statistics don't have that status—it is only in recent times that the need for better migration statistics has become strong (same as environment statistics). It is difficult to say whether this situation in any way makes it harder to secure sufficient funding for migration statistics, compared to the older, well-established sectoral systems.

The allocation of government funds for the sectoral statistics systems depends on decisions regarding statistical activities in the coming years, as outlined in the national statistics development plan. In addition, funds for special activities (projects, surveys, etc.) may be obtained from international organisations or through bilateral partnerships.

Migration Statistics in the National Statistics Development Plan

The purpose of the national statistics development plan is to outline the statistical activities for the coming 3–5 years, particularly the development of statistics relating to new subject matters and changes in the composition of the official statistics. A tool for the preparation of strategic plans, developed by Paris 21, is the National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDSs).

The need for funding for new development work must be raised in the discussions about the plan. For migration statistics, it is important that the development and improvement of methods for using registers, administrative data and "big data" receive sufficient funding.

Many countries rely heavily on external funding or technical support (e.g. from the IOM, UNDESA, Eurostat, GIZ or the World Bank). It is important that collection and reporting of migration data collection and reporting continue reliably over time, even after donor projects end. To ensure this, the NSO may develop a sustainability plan for the production of migration statistics. The plan includes activities to: institutionalise data collection into national systems, build the capacity of the NSO, ensure budgetary allocations from government, and strengthen data sharing and governance frameworks.

International and Regional Coordination and Collaboration.

Migration is, by its nature, an activity extending over neighbouring countries, regions and continents. Consequently, producing statistics on migration for a country will involve coordination and collaboration with other countries, international organisations and African institutions and regional communities

The cooperation with international organisations such as the IOM, UNDESA and ILO covers several types of activities:

- The NSO participates in international development projects and committees.
- The international organisations provide technical assistance in different areas, such as capacity building projects and survey design.
- The NSO shares national estimates of migration with the UN and other international organisations.

The African cooperation includes the same activities as the international cooperation. The main actors are AUC/STATAFRIC, AMO and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), see sections 8.1 and 8.2.

Regional Technical Working Groups (RTWG) have been established in several RECs, consisting of key producers of migration and displacement statistics from the respective Member States. Through these groups, coordination with Member States and exchange and peer learning have been facilitated.

Networks

The African Migration Data Network is the first-ever network on migration statistics on the African continent. Re-initiated in 2025, it includes focal points from AU Member States (NSOs and migration-relevant ministries), RECs and African Development Institutions. The objectives are to:

- Promote the exchange of good practices on migration data issues on the continent
- Facilitate coordination and collaboration in the implementation of migration data-related initiatives

- Promote the sharing of migration data across Africa
- Contribute to the harmonisation of migration concepts, definitions and data methods

7.3 Improving Migration Statistics Systems

National systems regarding migration statistics may be divided into three broad categories according to their setup: those relying entirely on field-based data collection (population censuses and household or other surveys), those with fully administrative systems (well-established register-based statistical systems) and those using a combination of both field-based and administrative sources. All three types of systems face common cross-cutting challenges, such as needing to account for the highly mobile nature of migrant populations, which makes them difficult to measure.

In order to choose the most appropriate methodology for producing migration statistics, the key priority for a country should be to identify the most appropriate data sources and the set of rules for applying the definition of international migrant that ensure consistency between data on international migration flows and the resident population stock, and the full coverage of the related population.

Countries should work towards establishing an integrated and comprehensive migration data system that harnesses administrative registers for migration statistics, supplemented with field-based data collection relevant to migration, alternative data sources and innovative methods. Data from border crossings, permits, refugee and asylum applications can all be used, as well as data that record apprehensions and deportations. The increased use of administrative data, although not perfect, not only promises a reduction in costs related to the production of migration statistics (and population statistics as a whole) and their improved timeliness, but also addresses the issue of decreasing response rates in field-based data collection.

Data integration, the process of combining data from two or more sources to produce statistical outputs, represents a useful strategy for improving the quality and availability of migration statistics. In many circumstances, it can provide more timely, accurate and granular data than relying on a single data source, while incurring lower costs and a reduced respondent burden compared to new data collection.

Establishing or improving migration data systems requires a well-structured enabling environment and effective coordination among various stakeholders. This involves creating robust legal and technical frameworks that facilitate data sharing, integration and protection across different organisations and government agencies.

Establishing National Technical Working Groups, including bringing together technicians from different organisations and agencies producing migration statistics or maintaining administrative sources, can raise the level of knowledge about different sources available and eventually facilitate data sharing and integration. Regular meetings of such National Technical groups are preferable for information sharing between members and data updates.

Members States such as Uganda and Kenya have National Technical Working Groups coordinated by their respective NSOs. For ease of managing data production, it is recommended that countries adopt a similar model in coordinating migration data production.

The establishment of, or transition to, a robust migration data collection system represents a long-term investment and should not be viewed as a formula that can

be implemented overnight. Capacity building and collaboration are essential for developing a migration data system that is aligned with international standards, capable of producing relevant, periodical and reliable statistics that meet policy needs. An early step in the development of a system should be the formation of a dedicated analytical unit on migration statistics at the NSO.

In light of the various recommendations that provide options for the development of migration statistics, it is important for countries to take stock of their strengths in relation to migration statistics and to reinforce those. This stocktaking exercise helps identify data gaps—both in terms of sources and indicators—which can then be systematically addressed. The development of a migration statistics system is something all countries need to aspire to, so that the demands of users can be met and so that the UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and Temporary Mobility, explained in Chapter 2, can be implemented.

More specifically, countries with good censuses and surveys should invest and capitalise more on the benefits of administrative data and try and improve its quality. Countries with the opposite experience can consider migration surveys or modules in other purpose surveys and censuses, which attempt to collect more detailed information about migration and the characteristics of migrants.

While IDPs are not international migrants, their inclusion in national migration statistics and development planning is essential. Accurate disaggregated data will support:

- Durable solutions including return, reintegration and/or resettlement.
- Inclusion in national censuses and development plans and programmes.
- Evidence-based policymaking that is inclusive of displaced populations.

However, integration of IDPs into broader data systems must be achieved without compromising privacy or protection. Data practices should also recognise overlapping vulnerabilities, ensuring that women, children, older persons and marginalised groups receive specific privacy protection. A data system that protects IDPs' privacy, dignity and rights is not only a legal and ethical imperative, but also a cornerstone of effective migration governance.

Migration Statistics Systems in the Regional Economic Communities and at STATAFRIC

CHAPTER

8

8.1 Migration Statistics Systems in the Regional Economic Communities

Some of the RECs collect and aggregate primary data from their Member States and produce statistics on migration and migrants in the economic community. The migration statistics systems in the RECs are at different stages of the development process, ranging from a fully established system in operation for several years, to newer and growing systems. The data collection instruments are developed at an REC level and differ in coverage (comprehensiveness) and, although there are efforts to apply established international concepts, the instruments may sometimes differ in their operational definitions of concepts.

Training to fill in the regional data collection instruments is provided in meetings of Regional Technical Working Groups, where such Groups exist. The regional data collection exercises thereby contribute to the strengthening of capacity as well as the harmonisation of migration statistics in the respective RECs.

To avoid duplication, the regional data collections managed by the RECs do not include labour migration statistics, which are collected by the International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS) questionnaire (see below). Furthermore, data collected from overlapping Member States need to be compared and aligned between the RECs in question.

Economic Community of Western African States

The Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) Commission started collecting data on migration in 2018. The REC has since developed a tool for collecting and managing data on migration to inform regional indicators. The tool has been designed with tables for each indicator, providing information on intra-regional movements and movements outside the region.

In total, twelve key regional indicators were selected. The levels of disaggregation vary according to the indicators and include breakdowns by emigrants, immigrants, sex, age, level of education, etc. The main indicators include regular and irregular migration stocks and flows, stocks of refugees and asylum seekers, as well as remittances.

Several sources are generally used at the national level to obtain migration data for the indicators. The main sources used are population censuses, national household surveys, administrative sources (Migration Police, Ministry of Labour, etc.) and data from international organisations.

To develop capacity for the countries in the region and to ensure proper completion of the questionnaire in accordance with regional and international standards on migration, a methodological guide has been developed for all stakeholders in charge of data collection and production.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) launched a migration statistics harmonisation programme in 2019 to address the region's complex migration dynamics, including mixed migration flows, displacement due to conflict and climate change, and labour mobility. Data collection began in 2020 using a standardised tool designed to capture key priority indicators. These indicators were organised into thematic categories, covering migration stocks and flows, irregular migration (including human trafficking and smuggling), refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons, border movements, remittances and diaspora populations. Data are disaggregated by sex, age, country of origin, nationality and inflows/outflows.

Key sources at the national level to obtain migration and displacement data for the regional indicators include population and housing censuses, national household surveys, administrative records (e.g. migration and refugee agencies, Ministries of Interior and Labour, Central Banks), as well as international organisations (IOM, UNHCR, etc.).

IGAD is currently developing Regional Migration and Displacement Guidelines to establish a common understanding of methodologies, concepts and definitions among all stakeholders involved in the migration and displacement data value chain.

East African Community

The East African Community (EAC) has an established statistics unit, and regional statistics are routinely compiled through regional technical working groups. Before

2021, the main statistics compiled were economic statistics with some social statistics. Since 2021, the EAC has constituted a standalone regional Technical Working Group (TWG) on migration and displacement statistics.

The TWG developed a data collection tool to collect data on the EAC's priority indicators on migration and displacement statistics. The tool collects data mainly from administrative sources on stocks and flows of refugees and asylum seekers, various types of permits and passes issued (work permits, resident permits, student passes, dependants' passes, etc.), entries and exits, stateless persons and remittances. The EAC, like other RECs, also supports the collection of data for indicators on international migrant stocks and flows through the AUC-ILMSQ. The data are complemented by data from international organisations.

The EAC is currently developing EAC Harmonisation Guidelines on the compilation of migration and displacement statistics. These guidelines by the EAC are in line with global and international recommendations/standards and are designed to complement the STATAFRIC Guidelines.

The EAC also compiles further data on cross-border movements as part of monitoring the implementation of the EAC Protocol for the establishment of the Common Market. This protocol allows for five freedoms and two rights of movement and establishment for EAC citizens in another EAC Partner State.

Members of the National Implementation Committees (NIC) collect these data routinely in their administrative processes and upload the relevant data directly to the East Africa Monitoring System (EAMS). The EAC Secretariat then undertakes a final compilation and validation round at each Partner State. The Regional Monitoring Group and EAC policy organs undertake the final validation before using the data to monitor the progress towards the Common Market.

8.2 STATAFRIC's Migration Statistics System

STATAFRIC, the African Union Institute for Statistics, collects and aggregates data on migrants and migration by collecting data directly from the Member States or, alternatively, from the RECs (member state data reported to the REC).

The migration statistics system is still developing; data on migrants and migration is currently collected and presented in a joint AU-ILO partnership arrangement.

The Labour Migration Statistics System

The International Labour Migration Statistics Questionnaire (ILMSQ), administered by the ILO, collects statistics globally from NSOs, the main data sources being labour force surveys, censuses, other household surveys with economic activity modules and administrative datasets. The data collected make up the ILOSTAT database on International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS), with indicators describing the number and profile of international migrant workers, their situation in the labour market and employment patterns, their main origin and destination countries and the magnitude of inward and outward migration flows.

Up to 2022, the ILO and AUC conducted data collection on labour migration in Africa by means of two parallel questionnaires to all the Member States (the ILMS and a separate AUC questionnaire). However, starting from 2022, the two organisations have combined their data collection efforts with the aim of aligning the data collection on labour migration statistics and to lessen the response burden on the countries.

The joint questionnaire includes instructions to ensure consistency in the use of key definitions and concepts in line with international statistical standards. The questionnaire is divided into four separate Excel files:

- Tables based on country of birth to define international migration
- Tables based on country of citizenship to define international migration
- Tables requesting data on nationals abroad
- AUC/STATFRIC tables, with indicators of particular interest in the African context:
  - total population by sex, age and place of birth
  - total population by sex, age and citizenship
  - personal transfers sent from nationals abroad, by country of origin (remittances) in USD

The ILMSQ, with its additional tables for African countries, constitutes a most important source of migration statistics for the continent.

8.3 Development of an AUC System Based on a Set of Common Indicators

An important use of the statistics on migrants and migration at the RECs and the AU level is to monitor changes in the migrant stock and migration flows in the region/continent. For this purpose, a set of monitoring indicators common to all countries should be defined. The measurement of the indicators should be subject to common rules/standards for data collection and data processing (data editing, imputations, estimation, documentation, metadata).

STATAFRIC is developing a statistics system based on a set of indicators. The list of core stock and flow indicators proposed by the UN Expert Group on Migration Statistics (see section 4.1), supplemented by certain additional indicators covering priority themes and disaggregations, provide the basis for the work.

The development work includes an assessment of the capability of the countries with weak migration statistics systems to provide data on the indicators. It may be necessary to prioritise indicators that can be reliably reported by most Member States, while allowing more time for other indicators and for Member States to strengthen their capacity to report on the indicators.

In the development of a system of harmonised data collection and processing, STATAFRIC is considering various options, namely : 1) the data can be collected directly from the Member States and processed by STATAFRIC; 2) the data can be collected and processed by the RECs and reported to STATAFRIC; and 3) the system can be built on the existing AU-ILO infrastructure with data collection by ILMSQ and data processing performed in collaboration between STATAFRIC and the ILO.

Resources for developing and maintaining the system are an issue. STATAFRIC and many of the RECs are currently strengthening their organisations to reach a higher quality standard for their statistics system.

Additional Data for Migration Policy

CHAPTER

9

Migration is a cross-cutting theme that has an impact in various sectors. Besides acknowledging such themes as relevant policy issues, it is necessary to be able to collect data around them. There is currently an ongoing development process between various stakeholders to determine what data are needed and how to collect them.

For this document, there will be a focus on selected themes, for which there have been global initiatives or efforts thus far. However, various other themes may be identified. For some of these themes, like children on the move, methodological guides have been developed and indicators identified. Other themes such as health and climate still require guidance in terms of data collection and indicators.

9.1 A Special Focus on Gender in Migration Statistics

Many countries have requirements within their statistical systems for data to be disaggregated by sex. As a result, individual-based official statistics are often sex-disaggregated. Furthermore, the UN's Beijing Platform for Action—which supports the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)—states that national statistical services should work to ensure that statistics are disaggregated by sex and age.

Textbox 12. Beijing: Platform for Action 1995

The Platform has a specific strategic objective dealing with gender statistics, objective H.3 'Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation' (para 209–212), under the critical area 'Institutional mechanism for the advancement of women'.

The main goal expressed by the Platform is that all statistics related to individuals are collected, compiled, analysed and presented by sex and age and that they reflect problems, issues and questions related to women in society.

In addition, gender statistics need to be produced in close collaboration with users to respond to the needs of policymakers, researchers, the media and the public. In order for users' needs to be considered, it is necessary to examine gender concerns and goals in society, with reference to women, men, girls and boys, and to identify the necessary statistics and indicators to highlight and address these concerns.

In the area of migration, gender issues may include, for example, the relatively low share of women among migrant workers. While women have accounted for around 45 per cent of all international migrants (LMSRA 2019), the share of women among migrant workers was 38 per cent. Large numbers of migrant women are engaged in informal work, as well as unpaid care and domestic labour, which may partly explain their underrepresentation in the labour force (ILO 2016b, 11).

Gender issues concern both male and female migrants. Gender statistics mean that, in addition to producing breakdowns by sex, the necessary statistics and indicators to highlight problems and issues need to be identified and presented, to address the situation for women and men and to assess and monitor the related changes.

9.2 Children on the Move

The working definition of "children on the move" is broader than migrant and displaced children, and includes children who are not migrating but are affected by the migration/displacement of their parents/caregivers, for instance, as well as stateless children, victims of trafficking, etc. This is why disaggregating data by age (and sex) is not sufficient, and why dedicated guidelines and methodological work on children on the move are needed.

IDAC has developed guidelines with recommendations on data collection and indicators to ensure that data on migration and forced displacement of children are collected in a manner that leaves no child behind and that ensures the required disaggregation is made available. The indicators are relevant, measurable and disaggregated on every aspect relevant to migrant and displaced children's well-being, including health, education, living conditions and child protection. The recommendations include collecting five stock and five flow numbers to track the resident population, entries, exits and displacements of children on the move. These constitute the core statistics that every country should collect data and report on[35].

While the guidelines have not yet been endorsed by the UNSC, they are aligned with existing statistical frameworks and enjoy wide and strong support from the migration and displacement statistics community. The indicators recommended are consistent with those of the UN Expert Group, when it comes to stocks and flows. The indicators are included here under a separate heading due to the need to highlight IDAC indicators per se.

35 Guidelines-on-Indicators-for-Children-on-the-Move-FINAL.pdf

Table 9.1. Key indicators related to children on the move

Category / theme	Migration statistics / indicator	Primary topics for disaggregation
Stock	**Number / proportion of children in the total child resident population:** • Foreign-born citizens • Native-born foreign citizens • Foreign-born foreign citizens • Native-born (native) citizens	• Age • Sex • COB • COC
Flow	**Annual number of immigrant children who are:** • Foreign-born citizens • Native-born foreign citizens • Foreign-born foreign citizens • Native-born (native) citizens	• Age • Sex • COB • COC
Flow	**Annual number of emigrant children who are:** • Foreign-born citizens • Native-born foreign citizens • Foreign-born foreign citizens • Native-born (native) citizens	• Age • Sex • COB • COC
Stock	Number / Percentage of refugee children among the population of interest	• Age • Sex • COB • COC
Stock	Number / Percentage of **internally displaced children** among the population of interest	• Age • Sex • Usual place of residence (habitual place of residence)
Stock	Number / Percentage of **asylum-seeking children** among the population of interest	• Age • Sex • COB • COC
Stock	Number / Percentage of **stateless children** in the context of migration and displacement among the population of interest	• Age • Sex • COB • With recognised statelessness status/ without a recognised nationality status in a country
Flow	Number / Percentage of children who were f**orcibly displaced for the first time** during a specified period of time among the population of interest	• Age • Sex
Flow	Number / Percentage of children who are **arriving unaccompanied** or separated among the population of interest	• Age • Sex • COB • COC
Flow	Number of asylum-seeking children who **received a decision** during a period of time	• Age • Sex • COB • COC

In addition to the above core statistics on children on the move, there are additional thematic areas wherein indicators related to children lie that can be considered core or additional. These themes and indicators are:

- Health and nutrition
  - Prevalence of malnutrition
  - Adolescent birth rate (age group 10–14 and 15–19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group
  - Proportion of the target population covered by essential health services
- Education
  - Proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics
  - Completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)
  - Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training
- Child protection
  - Proportion of children under 5 years whose births have been registered with a civil authority
  - Proportion of children on the move who were provided with a sustainable solution based on best interest procedure
- Poverty
  - Proportion of the population living under the national poverty line, by sex and age
  - Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

9.3 Forced Displacement & Statelessness

Given the nature of forced displacement and statelessness and the particular impacts these experiences have on affected populations, specific policy data needs arise. For refugees, the Global Compact on Refugees provides a key resource for describing these areas, some of which are familiar priorities for other migrants—including education, jobs and livelihoods, health and food security—whilst others are specific to the refugee experience, such as data related to reception and solutions. For those who are internally displaced, the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement provide a sound reference point to deduce data policy needs. For the stateless population, the 1954 and 1961 Conventions on Statelessness outline the rights of stateless people, which translate neatly into data priorities from a policy perspective.

For all these groups, the Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics undertook a comprehensive review of priority policy data needs. This resulted in a list of recommended indicators, including those related to specific SDGs[36], incorporated into each set of statistical recommendations.

36 Sustainable Development Goals - EGRISS

9.4 Health

Health is an important facet of any person's life, and migrants are no different. Access to basic health services is a key component of migrant integration. In essence, access to health is a basic human right and is essential for sustainable development as well as to achieve a demographic dividend. It is a precondition for being able to work and able to contribute to the social and economic development of host and origin communities. In terms of health, we often speak of social determinants of health, which are factors that impact our health in a holistic manner. Migration is one of these social determinants, due to the impact that moving from one place might have in terms of changing living conditions and access to health services. Access to health care for migrants forms part of migration governance and policy, and hence knowledge of the use of a service such as health care is important for policymaking and migration governance. Migrants may be exposed to different health risk factors, disease profiles or inequalities in accessing necessary health care. Migration can also be an enabler for better health outcomes. A refugee with a chronic condition may be able to get the necessary care in a host country. On the other hand, irregular migrants carry a stigma and face various social, cultural and economic barriers, which limit their access to health care in a host country.

Migration health data may refer to health and social determinants of migrant populations, access to health care systems by different migrant types, as well as data on the spread of disease along migrant routes. A major challenge is the limited visibility of migrants within National Health Information Systems. Migrant health data is typically only collected during targeted health campaigns, such as those conducted in border communities, where migrants are the specific focus. Outside of these efforts, migrants are often overlooked in routine data collection systems. They are also frequently underrepresented in household surveys that measure health access and service use. Even when migrants are included, survey sampling methods often result in very small numbers of migrant respondents, limiting the usefulness of the data for meaningful analysis.

When it comes to the health information systems mentioned above, it may be the case that some facilities such as larger hospitals do collect migratory status variables, but these are then not reported on at district, provincial or national levels. This clearly produces a situation where even those data that are collected are not usable, since they are not a complete representation of health care access and usage by migrant communities.

It is abundantly clear that, in order to track commitments to the GCM and to respond to the need to disaggregate indicators from Agenda 2030, particularly health (Goal 3), data sources are required that make migrants visible therein. In collecting data on the health of migrants, it is important to adhere to ethics standards by ensuring the confidentiality of migrants and focusing on the aggregate rather than on the cases of specific individuals that can be easily identified. Sharing individuals' health records should not be encouraged, particularly with security sector state entities. The advice to African countries is to identify data sources where health dynamics are measured and to ensure that migrants are identified in these sources for all major migrant types that prevail in the respective countries. Coordination and cooperation between health departments, ministries of the interior and NSOs are critical to ensure that anonymised data are shared with the NSO for further processing and to meet the obligations of each country to the GCM and the Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030, to mention just two multilateral frameworks.

9.5 Climate Change

In 2023, Africa was home to just over 35 million internally displaced persons (IDMC 2024). Of these, the number of displaced persons due to natural disasters increased from 1.1 million in 2009 to 6.3 million in 2023. Three-quarters of these were due to flooding, with about 11 per cent due to droughts. The management of displacement in Africa has certainly improved due to investments in measurements, but still more needs to be done to be able to react adequately from a programming and policy perspective. By the end of 2023, IDMC reported that 7.7 million people globally were living in displacement due to disasters.

Climate change migration is defined as that which occurs due to sudden or progressive change in the environment due to climate change. These are migrants who are obliged to leave their habitual place of residence or choose to do so, either in a temporary or permanent manner, within a state or across an international border. Climate change migration is a sub-category of environmental migration, with a focus on one type of environmental migration due to the change in climate, in this case. One of the more controversial issues is related to the magnitude of this type of migration and whether we can talk about mass migration from one region to another. The current consensus is that migration due to climate change mostly occurs over short distances within countries or within regions.

Data to be collected should relate to displacement as recommended by EGRISS, as well as evacuations linked to disasters at national, sub-national and local levels by government agencies, NGOs and agencies involved in disaster relief as well as in collaboration with international organisations. Operational data sources from humanitarian agencies are also valuable, such as the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). All such data should be disaggregated by age and sex in order to understand such people's needs, whether it be in affected places or en route to the place they are being displaced to. Other data can also be administrative, such as humanitarian visas or other permits related to disasters. These can provide data on cross-border movements due to environmental events more generally. Big data can also be used, such as mobile telephony that can track movements before and after the date of a disaster event. These can be useful particularly at a local level, where traditional survey tools may struggle to provide adequate coverage or timeliness.

One of the difficulties in collecting such data relates to identifying migration where the environment is the main cause of such a move. Even when asked about their reasons for migration, respondents state that e.g. environmental impacts are usually secondary to other more direct reasons. It may be useful to ask instead for up to 3 reasons why a person moved over a specific period. Duration of displacement is also a difficulty that databases struggle to measure. These are related to durable solutions and whether such solutions have been reached. Durable solutions are a set of conditions for living standards or needs that enable individuals to stand on their own two feet after being internally displaced. (IASC)

As can be imagined, climate-related displacement is significantly under-reported. Events in marginalised areas or small-scale events that have significant impact can result in these not being reported.

Beyond descriptive data, there is a need for additional research involving, for example, the link between climate change and violence, the benefits of movements identified through geo-spatial referenced data at local levels and how to mitigate the risks of these, and finally research and data that provide better predictive analytics.

Data Integration

CHAPTER

10

Integrating data from surveys with administrative data offers a powerful approach to enhance the quality, coverage and analytical value of migration statistics. In many African countries, both sources provide complementary strengths; surveys can capture individual experiences, intentions and socio-economic characteristics, while administrative data, often derived from border control, civil registration, work permits or social services, can offer large-scale, regularly updated information with wide geographic coverage.

This integration process requires careful planning, institutional collaboration and technical capacity. The following best practices aim to guide statistical offices in effectively integrating these sources to improve the production and use of migration statistics.

Establish a Clear Purpose and Use Case: Define the objectives and use cases for the combined data. Integration should respond to specific policy questions, monitoring needs (e.g. regional mobility trends, irregular migration, remittance flows) or reporting requirements (e.g. SDG indicators, AU Migration Policy Framework).

Understand Strengths and Limitations: Surveys and administrative data differ in design, scope and data quality. Understanding these differences is key to designing an effective integration strategy.

- Surveys (e.g. Labour Force Surveys, DHS or migration modules) capture details on intentions, duration, reasons for moving and remittances, but are often limited in frequency and sample size.
- Administrative data (e.g. residence permits, border entries/exits) offer continuous records but may vary in completeness and are often collected for operational, not statistical, purposes.

Ensure Compatibility and Interoperability: Effective integration requires alignment between datasets in terms of definitions, classifications and variables.

- Harmonise definitions (e.g. "migrant", "residence") across sources, aligned with international standards.
- Standardise codes (e.g. countries, sex, age, nationality).
- Align reference periods (surveys have fixed recall periods; administrative data are often continuous).
- Where compatibility is incomplete, document metadata clearly.

Respect Data Privacy and Legal Frameworks: Integrating survey and administrative data typically involves handling sensitive personal data.

- Comply with national and regional data protection laws (e.g. AU Convention on Cyber Security).
- Apply anonymisation/pseudonymisation, especially when linking at the individual level.
- Establish MoUs between agencies, detailing roles and data security responsibilities.
- Transparently inform survey respondents about data usage.

Promote Institutional Collaboration: Successful integration depends on collaboration between national statistical offices, migration authorities, border agencies, civil registration bodies and other data providers.

- Form inter-agency working groups to coordinate integration.
- Develop data-sharing protocols for secure and regular exchange.
- Invest in capacity-building for data producers and users.
- Encourage RECs to support harmonisation and cross-border collaboration.

Use Appropriate Techniques: Depending on data availability and quality, different integration methods can be used.

- Record linkage when common identifiers exist.
- Statistical matching when identifiers are absent.
- Model-based integration for generating estimates using both sources.

Pilot projects and experimental statistics are recommended before scaling up.

Ensure Transparent Documentation: Transparency in methods, assumptions and limitations is essential to build trust in the resulting statistics.

- Publish metadata and methodological notes.
- Clearly communicate strengths, limitations and added value to stakeholders.

Invest in Infrastructure: Long-term integration of survey and administrative data requires sustainable investment.

- Develop secure data management systems.
- Improve digitalisation of administrative processes.
- Strengthen institutional capacity in migration analysis and data science.

Data Privacy and Data Security

CHAPTER

11

11.1 Data Privacy and Data Security: General Concepts and Their Interdependence

In an era of digitalisation and interconnected systems, the protection of personal information is a paramount concern. Organisations across sectors are responsible for managing vast amounts of data. This responsibility necessitates the implementation of two crucial concepts: data privacy and data security. Although these terms are often used interchangeably, they represent distinct principles that, when integrated, provide a comprehensive framework for protecting sensitive information. Data privacy focuses on the appropriate use and control of personal information, while data security addresses protection from threats such as unauthorised access or breaches. Both are essential to ensuring that personal information is handled responsibly and securely.

11.1.1 Data Privacy: A Focus on Rights and Control

Data privacy, often referred to as information privacy, centres on individuals' rights to privacy and to control how their personal data are collected, used and shared. It emphasises transparency, consent and the lawful use of personal information. Data privacy is an element of governance and part of the ethical and legal obligations of organisations to ensure that personal data are handled in ways that respect individuals' rights, particularly regarding how data are collected, who has access to them, and for what purpose they are used.

More specifically, data privacy underscores the rights of individuals to determine how their personal information is collected, used and shared. This principle is deeply embedded in international and continental human rights law, including Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[37] and Article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights[38], both of which guarantee protection against arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy. Within the migration sphere, this right is further codified in Article 14 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families[39].

On the African continent, privacy and data protection have been codified through several key frameworks. The African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention, 2014) remains the most comprehensive legal instrument, setting out principles such as consent, legitimacy, proportionality and confidentiality in the processing of personal data. Complementing this, the African Union Personal Data Protection Guidelines (2018) provide 18 recommendations to guide Member States in developing legislation, regulatory bodies and operational safeguards. At the sub-regional level, the ECOWAS Supplementary Act on Personal Data Protection (2010) is binding on all ECOWAS Member States and obliges them to establish independent data protection authorities. Similarly, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Model Law on Data Protection (2013) offers a harmonised template for national laws, ensuring coherence across the region, while the East African Community (EAC) Framework for Cyberlaws, Phase II (2010), incorporates data protection and privacy provisions to promote consistency across Member States.

For migration governance, these frameworks underscore that privacy is not only a human right but also essential for building trust between migrants and institutions. Migrants must feel assured that their data will not be misused or disclosed in ways that could expose them to risks of exploitation, persecution or discrimination.

11.1.2 Data Security: Safeguarding Information from Threats

Data security refers to the technical measures, processes and policies used to protect data from unauthorised access, theft, breaches and other security risks. While data privacy governs how personal data should be handled ethically and lawfully, data security focuses on the mechanisms that ensure this data remains protected from malicious threats and inadvertent exposure. It involves implementing a range of measures designed to safeguard the confidentiality, integrity and availability of data across its lifecycle, whether at rest, in transit or in use.

37 https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

38 https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights#:~:text=Article%2017,-1.&text=No%20one%20shall%20be%20subjected%20to%20arbitrary%20or%20unlawful%20interference,against%20such%20interference%20or%20attacks.

39 https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-protection-rights-all-migrant-workers

More specifically, data security encompasses organisational, technical and procedural safeguards that protect personal data from unauthorised access, breaches or misuse. Internationally, the UN Principles on Personal Data Protection and Privacy (2018) emphasise confidentiality, integrity and availability as the foundation of secure data management. Humanitarian actors have also contributed to this body of practice: the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Rules on Personal Data Protection (2015, revised 2019) underline that secure handling of data is fundamental to preserving lives and dignity in crisis contexts.

At the African level, the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention, 2014) remains the most comprehensive continental instrument, obliging Member States to establish strong data security regimes, criminalise cyber-related offences and ensure secure data processing systems. Sub-regional frameworks reinforce these obligations. The ECOWAS Supplementary Act on Personal Data Protection (2010) requires Member States not only to respect privacy principles, but also to adopt technical and organisational measures that prevent data loss, alteration or unauthorised disclosure. In Southern Africa, the SADC Model Law on Computer Crime and Cybercrime (2012), alongside the Model Law on Data Protection (2013), highlights the importance of encryption, access controls and cybercrime prevention. Similarly, the East African Community (EAC) Regional Framework for Cyberlaws (2010, Phase II) calls for states to implement robust safeguards to protect personal data across digital platforms. In migration contexts, where databases may contain biometric information, visa records or refugee registration data, these measures are indispensable, as breaches could expose individuals to risks of exploitation, trafficking or persecution.

11.1.3 The Interdependence of Data Privacy and Data Security

Although data privacy and data security are distinct concepts, they are interdependent and work together to create a framework for protecting personal information. Without robust data security, the principles of data privacy cannot be upheld. Conversely, data security measures are most effective when guided by the ethical and legal principles of data privacy.

Privacy frameworks establish the ethical and legal principles for how personal data must be collected and used, while security mechanisms provide the technical means to enforce those principles. Without robust security, privacy rights cannot be guaranteed; without clear privacy rules, security efforts risk becoming purely technical exercises devoid of accountability. This interdependence is reflected in the African Union Personal Data Protection Guidelines (2018), which emphasise that safeguarding rights requires both normative and technical measures. At the sub-regional level, ECOWAS, SADC and the EAC have all underscored the need for harmonised approaches that integrate privacy and security, recognising that personal data increasingly flows across borders.

11.2 Data Privacy and Data Security in Statistics on Migration and Forced Displacement

In the realm of migration and displacement statistics, the integration of data privacy and data security creates a system that ensures data is used responsibly, while maintaining the confidentiality, integrity and availability of personal information. This applies both to the production of migration and displacement statistics, as well as the sharing of data between institutions.

11.2.1. Safeguarding Personal Data in Migration Contexts

As the demand for reliable, timely and comprehensive migration and displacement data continues to grow, driven by both global policy agendas and rapid technological advancements, the protection of personal information has become a pressing concern. Incidents such as data breaches, unauthorised disclosures and misuse of sensitive information underscore the need for robust safeguards. In the context of forced displacement, where data often concern highly vulnerable populations, the consequences of weak data-protection frameworks can be severe, putting individuals at risk of harm, exploitation or persecution.

At the same time, the international community increasingly relies on the cross-border sharing of migration data to support comparative analysis, policy development and evidence-based decision-making. This creates a tension between the need for accurate and frequent data and the obligation to uphold privacy as a fundamental human right. Striking this balance requires careful governance: effective frameworks must ensure that the utility of migration and displacement data never compromises the dignity, security and rights of migrants themselves.

Confidentiality is particularly crucial in sensitive contexts, such as cases of child migration, human trafficking or migrant smuggling. In these situations, disclosing an individual's identity, even inadvertently, can endanger lives. As a result, institutions handling data must strictly adhere to applicable privacy and data protection legislation while implementing internal safeguards that prevent unauthorised access or misuse.

11.2.2. International Instruments on Data Protection

The principle of protecting personal data is rooted in international human rights law. At the core lies Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[40], which enshrines the right to privacy as a universal standard. This foundation has been further reinforced in key international instruments:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 17)[41], prohibits arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy.
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 16)[42], affirms children's right to protection from unlawful interference with their privacy, family or correspondence.

40 https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

41 https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights

42 https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child

- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (Article 14)[43], protects migrant workers and their families against arbitrary interference with privacy.
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 22)[44], ensures that persons with disabilities enjoy legal protection of their privacy, including the confidentiality of personal and health information.

Together, these instruments create a strong normative basis for embedding data protection into migration governance.

11.2.3. Continental and Regional Frameworks

At the continental level, African states have also taken steps to integrate privacy and data protection into their governance frameworks. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Article 10)[45] reflects the importance of safeguarding children's privacy and identity in migration and other contexts.

In 2018, the Personal Data Protection Guidelines for Africa[46] were published as a joint initiative of the Internet Society and the African Union Commission. These guidelines set out 18 recommendations to guide the evolving process of developing data protection laws and policies across the continent. They were designed as a blueprint for African Union Member States, recognising that data protection is a dynamic field shaped by technological, legal and social change.

11.2.4. Frameworks Within International and Multilateral Organisations

Given the scale and sensitivity of the data they process, many international and multilateral organisations working on migration and forced displacement have developed their own frameworks to ensure compliance with privacy principles and to safeguard beneficiaries. Notable examples include:

- United Nations Principles on Personal Data Protection and Privacy (2018)[47], these principles guide the entire UN system in ensuring that data collection and use are consistent with international human rights standards.
- Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy[48], established by the Human Rights Council in 2015, this mandate monitors privacy-related violations globally and reports annually, ensuring oversight and accountability.
- Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression (2018)[49], highlighted the human rights risks associated with artificial intelligence, noting the disproportionate impact of automated systems on vulnerable groups, including migrants.

43 https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-protection-rights-all-migrant-workers

44 Available on: https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities#:~:text=Article%2022%20%2D%20Respect%20for%20privacy,-No%20person%20with&text=Persons%20with%20disabilities%20have%20the,an%20equal%20basis%20with%20others.

45 https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36804-treaty-african_charter_on_rights_welfare_of_the_child.pdf

46 https://www.internetsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/AUCPrivacyGuidelines_2018508_EN.pdf

47 https://unsceb.org/sites/default/files/imported_files/UN-Principles-on-Personal-Data-Protection-Privacy-2018_0.pdf

48 https://unsceb.org/sites/default/files/imported_files/UN-Principles-on-Personal-Data-Protection-Privacy-2018_0.pdf

49 https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-freedom-of-opinion-and-expression

- UNICEF Policy on Personal Data Protection (2020)[50], sets out a global framework for UNICEF offices to process personal data responsibly, with particular emphasis on protecting children.
- World Bank Group Personal Data Privacy Policy[51], defines seven principles governing how the World Bank processes personal data, aligned with international standards and applicable to all five institutions of the Group.

Safeguarding personal data in migration and displacement contexts is not just a technical issue, but a matter of human rights protection, humanitarian responsibility and trust. Data protection frameworks, whether international, regional or institutional, exist to ensure that the increasing demand for data does not compromise the dignity or security of individuals. For organisations, governments and practitioners, the challenge lies in operationalising these principles: developing practical tools, building institutional capacity and embedding a culture of data responsibility that protects those whose information they handle.

11.2.5 Benefits of Data Privacy and Data Security in the Production and Integration of Migration and Displacement Statistics

Migration and displacement statistics are derived either from censuses or surveys, or from data collected at border crossings, refugee camps, asylum applications, immigration offices and other points of interaction with migrants. These data may include personal details such as names, birth dates, nationalities, immigration statuses and biometric identifiers. The sensitive nature of these data makes it essential for organisations to adhere to both data privacy and security principles in their production.

The benefits of adhering to data privacy and security in the context of migration and displacement statistics production include:

Ensuring Compliance With Legal and Ethical Standards: data privacy frameworks require organisations to handle personal data in a lawful and transparent manner. In the context of migration and displacement statistics, respecting data privacy means providing transparency about how the data will be used and ensuring that data are processed only for legitimate purposes. Data security practices, such as encryption and access controls, ensure that these data remain protected from unauthorised access or misuse.

Maintaining Public Trust: integrating data privacy and security in the production of migration and displacement statistics fosters trust between the public, migrants and the organisations responsible for collecting the data. People may be more willing to provide accurate information if they know that their data will be protected and used responsibly. Trust is particularly important in situations involving vulnerable populations, such as refugees or asylum seekers, who may be hesitant to share personal information due to fears of persecution or deportation.

Minimising the Risk of Data Breaches and Misuse: data security mechanisms, such as encryption, data masking and secure storage, ensure that even if data are intercepted during collection or analysis, they will remain unreadable and unusable by unauthorised individuals.

50 https://www.unicef.org/supply/media/5356/file/Policy-on-personal-data-protection-July2020.pdf

51 https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/943057e81239587a70c5a6bc39532728-0240012021/original/ca36fdc451914d89a49d6189a98bad86.pdf

Textbox 13. Examples of data privacy and data security in statistics production:

- A national migration authority collects biometric data (fingerprints, facial images) from asylum seekers. To comply with data privacy regulations, the authority informs individuals about how their data will be used and stores the data in an encrypted format, accessible only to authorised personnel with security clearances.
- A statistical agency conducts a survey on migration patterns and ensures that personal identifiers, such as names and addresses, are pseudonymised before analysis. Strong data security measures, such as encrypted databases and restricted access, are implemented to protect the original data files.
- During the data entry process for migration statistics, all records are backed up using secure, encrypted cloud services, ensuring data availability in case of technical failure, while maintaining confidentiality through secure access protocols.

11.2.6. Benefits of Data Privacy and Data Security in Sharing Migration and Displacement Data Between Institutions

Migration data are often shared between various institutions, including government agencies, international organisations, NGOs and research institutions, to facilitate migration management and policy development. Given the international nature of migration, cross-border data sharing is common.

Benefits of data sharing include:

Enhancing Cross-Institutional Collaboration. Secure data-sharing and data integration practices that align with privacy regulations enable organisations to collaborate more effectively. For example, immigration authorities and national statistical institutes may need to share data to produce comprehensive migration statistics. By ensuring that data shared between institutions are anonymised, and encrypted where possible, organisations can collaborate while protecting individuals' privacy.

Mitigating Security Risks in Cross-Border Data Transfers. When sharing migration data across national borders, data security and privacy regulations may differ. Adhering to robust data security standards (e.g. encryption, secure transfer protocols) and complying with privacy laws ensures that personal information remains protected, even when it crosses into different legal jurisdictions.

Establishing Clear Governance and Accountability. Privacy and security frameworks help institutions to define clear roles and responsibilities for managing shared migration data. Data-sharing agreements or Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) between institutions should outline the data security measures to be taken, including how access will be controlled, how breaches will be handled and how long data will be retained. This governance structure ensures accountability, with all parties responsible for upholding both privacy and security standards.

Reducing Exposure of Personal Data. Privacy-enhancing techniques, such as data anonymisation and pseudonymisation, reduce the risk of exposing sensitive personal information when sharing data between institutions. Data security measures, such as encryption, protect these data during transit, ensuring that even if intercepted, they cannot be accessed by unauthorised individuals. By combining these approaches, organisations can share valuable statistics without compromising individuals' privacy or exposing them to harm. This aspect is important when sharing data on migrants and, in particular, when it comes to data on forcibly displaced populations (refugees, IDPs and stateless people) and asylum seekers.

Textbox 14. Examples of data privacy and data security in data sharing:

- National institutions share administrative data on permits issued, in order to explore whether such data can inform the development of migration flow statistics. All data are anonymised before being shared, ensuring that personal identifiers are removed while still providing valuable statistical insights. Data are transmitted over secure networks, and access is controlled to ensure that only authorised users can view the data.
- An NGO working on migrant rights collaborates with a government agency to analyse migration trends. A data-sharing agreement specifies that only aggregated data will be shared, and access will be restricted to a designated team of analysts who have undergone data security training.
- A national border control agency shares migration data with an international organisation to coordinate refugee resettlement. The data are anonymised before being shared. Data security measures, such as encrypted file transfers and secure communication channels, protect the data during the exchange.

Textbox 15. Example of managing data and privacy of Internally Displaced Persons.

- Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are among the most at-risk populations in Africa, often forced to flee due to conflict, disasters or climate-related shocks while remaining within their national borders. Reliable data on IDPs are vital for protection, humanitarian responses, durable solutions and policy planning for national authorities and other stakeholders. However, due to their vulnerability, IDP data systems must prioritise privacy, informed consent and data security, ensuring that protection is embedded at every step of the data cycle.
- Frameworks such as the African Union's Kampala Convention, the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the UN Principles on Personal data in Africa emphasise that IDPs must be treated with dignity and their rights respected throughout displacement and recovery. It is crucial to apply a "do no harm" principle to IDP management. Before any data collection or sharing, a thorough risk-benefit analysis should be conducted to ensure that data gathering will not increase the risk of IDPs being subjected to persecution, retaliation or stigmatisation.
- The data and rights of IDPs need to be protected throughout the data lifecycle. When collecting data, the process should be thoughtful, respectful and sensitive to the risks people face. Consent is a key component and should never be assumed. People need to clearly understand what information is being collected, for what purpose, who is collecting it and what the data will be used for. Once collected, data should only be used for the specific reason agreed upon. Other important aspects are secure storage, access control and safe and limited data sharing.
- The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) machine learning and digital technologies is growing in humanitarian contexts, including tracking displacement trends. While these technologies can enhance efficiency and provide valuable insights, they may also raise critical concerns regarding privacy, bias and accountability.

Data Dissemination

CHAPTER

12

Dissemination of statistics is crucial for fact-based social planning and evaluation. It helps in generating interest in the material without compromising communication principles. By presenting data as current news with visual illustrations, we can reach a broader audience and support democratic discussions. Migration statistics are an important area in this regard and need to attract a broader audience.

12.1 Importance of Dissemination in a National Statistical System

Dissemination is a cornerstone of any national statistical system, as it ensures that data and information reach the public, policymakers, researchers and other stakeholders in a usable and transparent way.

Dissemination should be an integrated part of the statistics production process, and the importance of dissemination lies in several key areas:

Decision-Making

By making statistical data accessible, dissemination supports evidence-based policy-making where decisions are made based on facts. It also enables governments and organisations to address societal issues effectively.

Transparency and Accountability

Openly sharing data fosters public trust in institutions by demonstrating a commitment to transparency and the accuracy of information. Easily accessible and transparent data also empower citizens from all walks of life to engage in discussions about national and regional development.

Economic and Social Insights

Dissemination helps businesses, researchers and the public to understand economic trends, demographic shifts and social changes, aiding in planning and innovation.

Global Comparability

Well-disseminated statistics contribute to international benchmarking, allowing countries to compare and align their policies with global standards.

Empowerment

Accessibility of data empowers citizens and communities to engage in discussions about national development and hold decision-makers accountable. Sharing data and methodologies enhances statistical literacy and capacity within and across African nations, fostering a culture of data-driven decision-making.

In essence, dissemination transforms raw data into a public good, bridging the gap between data collection and practical application.

12.2 Good Practices to Increase Audience/Users

Synthesising and presenting data: Statistics should be synthesised and presented as current news with visual illustrations to reach more users and meet media needs.

Responding to news items: Quick responses to news items with figures, correlations and interesting angles can capture media attention and highlight important issues.

Dissemination portals: Comprehensive presentations of statistics on popular and important topics should be organised according to the needs of specific target groups and be easily accessible through external search engines.

Mobile and universal design: Websites should be adapted for mobile devices and comply with universal design requirements to ensure easy access and usability.

Technical solutions: Implementing modern publishing solutions and revised information architecture will make it easier for users to navigate and find specific figures (statistics bank, for example).

12.3 International Standards

Why use international standards?

Using international standards for the dissemination of statistics has several advantages that enhance the value and usability of statistical information:

- **Global Comparability:** Statistics become available in a timely manner and increase the possibility of comparisons of data between countries using the same standard. This is essential for monitoring progress in global initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **Trust and Credibility:** Adhering to widely recognised standards also demonstrates a commitment to transparency and data integrity, which in turn fosters trust among international actors, organisations and citizens.
- **Research and Collaboration:** Properly disseminated statistics facilitate academic and cross-border research by providing consistent and reliable data, enabling fruitful global collaborations.
- **Efficient Crisis Response:** In times of emergencies, such as financial crises or natural disasters, available statistics allow countries to contribute effectively to coordinated international efforts.
- **Interoperability of Systems:** Common standards enable integration and compatibility between statistical systems, both locally and internationally, streamlining processes and reducing inefficiencies.

One of the international standards within the field of dissemination is the Enhanced General Data Dissemination System (e-GDDS). This framework was developed by the International Monetary Fund to guide members in the dissemination to the public of their economic and financial data and to assist countries with relatively weak statistical capacity. The emphasis on data dissemination in the e-GDDS will support transparency, encourage statistical development and help create strong synergies between data dissemination and surveillance.

The purposes of the e-GDDS are to:

- Encourage member countries to improve data quality.
- Provide a framework for evaluating needs for data improvement and setting priorities in this respect.
- Guide member countries in the dissemination to the public of comprehensive, timely, accessible and reliable economic, financial and socio-demographic statistics.

Fact sheets and guides can be found on the e-GDDS home page: *e-GDDS Home Page*.

Furthermore, to strengthen dissemination practices, the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) aims to regulate and bring coherence, predictability and transparency to the dissemination of key statistical products. The standard emphasises timeliness of disseminating reports as well as informing users promptly about any delays or interruptions to the usual publication of statistical reports. As an example, various reports by Statistics South Africa, including the Labour Market statistics reports and the Population Estimates, adhere to this standard. Adherence to the SDDS as well as the GDDS add to the credibility and reputation of a given NSO. Given that the standards are developed by the IMF, most of the reports that adhere to the above-mentioned standards are economic and financial in nature, although various population-based products are included as well.

12.4 Guidelines for Dissemination

Effective dissemination ensures not only the efficient distribution of statistics, but also raises awareness.

Before starting the dissemination process for the statistics and results from an organisation, there are several things to consider.

Who and what target groups do you want to reach with the information? How will you reach the different target groups? What resources do you have available? And are there any recommendations—local, national, regional or international—that you can use in your work.

12.4.1 Target Groups and Stakeholders

A distinction is usually made between stakeholders and target groups.

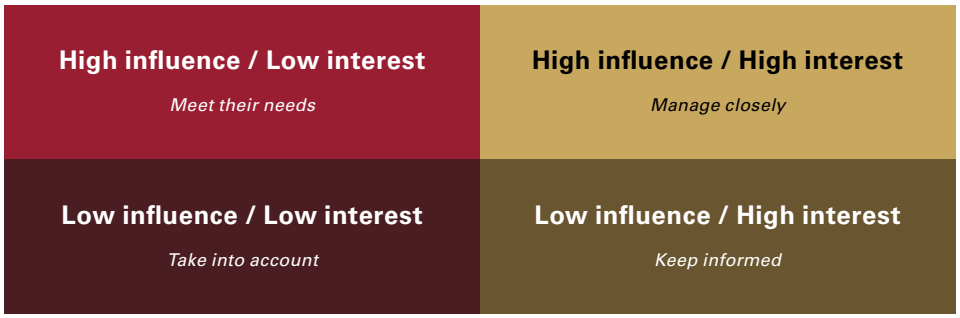
Stakeholders are most likely individuals and/or groups of actors that, in various ways, have an interest and impact in the statistics that will be disseminated. The stakeholders cannot be chosen: they exist whether communicating with them or not. Target audiences or target groups represent a narrower concept, where a statistical entity clearly defines and selects individuals or groups of actors as recipients of messages.

To make the various concepts more concrete and easier to describe, it is usually said that stakeholders are people, on both an individual as well as an organisational level, who are more or less directly affected by what is being disseminated.

The stakeholders are people or groups that you want to influence through the information you are disseminating. These persons can, for example, be individuals who can influence how resources are distributed and with whom an organisation therefore needs a special relationship.

When planning to disseminate information, it is therefore necessary to identify these various stakeholders, who they are, what influence they have, and to identify the best approach to be used in communicating with the various stakeholders.

Having identified the stakeholders, they can also be mapped in a Stakeholder Matrix. The aim of this is to understand how to approach the different stakeholders. Plot a location for each stakeholder, based on their levels of power (or influence) and interest. Each quadrant suggests how to treat or engage with stakeholders, such as meeting their needs, managing closely, keeping informed, and taking into account.



Influence: Ability to influence the organisation or resources.

Interest: How interested they are in the organisation/project succeeding.

The position allocated to a stakeholder in the grid shows the actions that need to be taken:

High Influence, Highly Interested Individuals (Manage closely): aim to fully engage these individuals, making the greatest efforts to satisfy them.

High Influence, Less Interested Individuals (Keep satisfied): put enough work in with these individuals, but not so much that they become burdened with your message.

Low Influence, Highly Interested Individuals (Keep informed): adequately inform these individuals and talk to them to ensure that no major issues are arising. These audiences can also help point out any areas that could be improved or have been overlooked.

Low Influence, Less Interested Individuals (Monitor): don't burden these stakeholder groups with excessive communication, although keep an eye out to check if their levels of interest or power change.

Target groups, unlike stakeholders, are usually a broader group of people. Target groups can be identified by age, gender, level of education, ethnicity or language, to name just a few different aspects.

Another aspect that differentiates target groups and stakeholders is that stakeholders have an interest and impact in the statistics that will be disseminated. The target group is more a recipient of the information. This does not mean that it is any easier or less important to communicate with and disseminate to a target group.

When planning to disseminate to a target group, it is necessary to specify what kind of statistics we want people to know more about. Also, knowing more about the target group will make it easier to use the right channels when disseminating. For instance, in the case of a region in a country:

- Who lives in the region?
    - gender and age balance
    - social structure
    - ethnic groups
- How do people use mass media, TV and/or radio?
- Are there regional mass media outlets we can use?
- Is social media important? If so, what kind? Is social media used for recreation or for information?
- Can advocates or well-known people be involved in the dissemination?

Examples of target groups

Media: The media is a crucial target group, as they help disseminate information and statistics to a broader audience.

Public, Administration and Business Sector: These groups are important end users of statistical information, utilising data for various purposes including policy-making, business decisions and public awareness.

General Public: The general public benefits from accessible and understandable statistics that inform them about societal trends and issues, enabling them to participate in informed discussions and decision-making.

Researchers: Researchers rely on accurate and comprehensive statistics to conduct studies, analyse trends and develop new insights that can influence policy and practice.

Students: Students use statistical data for academic purposes, including research projects, assignments and to enhance their understanding of various subjects. Accessible statistics help them develop critical thinking and analytical skills.

12.4.2 Channels

The choice of dissemination channels depends on who the statistical agency wants to reach. For better impact, the dissemination channel will usually differ when targeting specific stakeholders or a broader target group. The dissemination channel is a path through which the stakeholder or target group is reached with the message.

When preparing the dissemination process, it is necessary to consider both internal as well as external communication, within the organisation and for those outside.

When listing the channels to work with, it is necessary to adapt the message as well as the choice of channel to the recipient, as mentioned above. There are usually significant differences between rural and urban areas, as well as in respect of literacy, level of education and access to broadcast and/or social media.

The communication strategy or policy that your organisation uses will probably indicate which channels are to be prioritised.

Examples of internal and external channels:

Internal Channels

- Intranet
- Billboard
- Meetings
- E-mails
- WhatsApp or other mobile apps

External Channels

- Organisation's webpage
- E-mail
- Social media
    - Instagram
    - X
    - Facebook
    - LinkedIn
- Traditional media
    - TV
    - Radio
    - Newspapers
- Press conference
- Exhibition
- Seminar
    - Physical seminars
    - Online webinars
- Meetings
- Launches
- Leaflets

12.4.3 Process (map)

The flowchart below can concretise and clarify the workflow in connection with the dissemination of statistics. Note that this is an example, and that different ways and different types of flows that can be used.

Whenever larger and more important statistics are to be disseminated, there is need to review target groups and channels in particular. It is also necessary to have a vision of what is to be achieved with the dissemination of statistics. Is the dissemination about informing, is it about trying to change the way statistics are perceived or is it about influencing? These different examples affect the choice of target group and choice of channel.

The flowchart below can be applied to migration statistics as well as generally in the production of statistics.

1. Planning the communication

- **A.** In the production of statistics, it should be clear initially what is to be achieved with the statistics and how to achieve this. This includes the identification of stakeholders and target groups as well as which channels to use.
- **B.** User-needs surveys and analysis are very important to help with the planning of what to disseminate, as well as on what platforms and at what level of detail user needs are to be met (stakeholders and users).
- **C.** Ensure the involvement of the communication departments etc. of the statistical agency and other experts that will be working on the project. A strong collaboration with the communication, IT and subject matter departments within the NSO is recommended.
- **D.** The core of the planning process could be an advanced release calendar that sets the time for dissemination at the NSO level, to ensure that all the resources needed are available for the process and that experts are ready to respond to questions and enquiries.
- **E.** It is also recommended to investigate whether collaboration with statistical agencies in other countries, government agencies or NGOs might be extended to involvement in the dissemination process.

2. Various tailored communication and dissemination activities will take place. While statistical data and tables will be stored in a database, the statistics publication needs a place on the website to be linked to when issuing a press release or providing information through social media, for example.

3. It is an advantage to prepare and train spokespersons who can reply to questions about the statistics published.

4. The dissemination process should also include an evaluation, with a review of what went well or not and what lessons can be drawn for future dissemination. Constant evaluation of both the process and quality, as well as user-satisfaction, are essential steps.

12.5 Good Practices to Improve Dissemination

Release Schedule: Establish a clear and consistent schedule for the release of statistical data to ensure transparency and reliability

Data accessibility: Ensure that statistical data are easily accessible to all users. This includes providing data in various formats and through multiple channels, such as online databases, publications and mobile applications

Metadata: Provide comprehensive metadata to help users understand the context, sources and methods used in compiling the statistics

Dissemination Strategy: Develop a robust dissemination strategy that includes modern methods such as social media, interactive websites and open data platforms

Statistical Literacy: Promote statistical literacy among users to enhance their ability to interpret and use the data effectively

Coordination and Infrastructure: Strengthen coordination among various statistical agencies and invest in infrastructure to support efficient data processing and dissemination

Quality Assurance: Implement quality assurance measures to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the disseminated statistics

AU/STATAFRIC Support to Member States

CHAPTER

13

Introduction

The African Union Institute for Statistics (AU STATAFRIC) plays a pivotal role in supporting African member states in the collection and harmonization of migration statistics. Given the increasing relevance of migration within Africa, STATAFRIC's initiatives are critical for ensuring coherent and reliable statistical development across the continent. The following sections outline the frameworks, strategies, and support mechanisms STATAFRIC provides to member states in this domain.

13.1 Background and Context

Enhancing Migration Statistics

Migration is a growing phenomenon in Africa, characterized by increased intra-African migration, recurring migrant crises, and significant migratory flows to Gulf nations. This necessitates precise and harmonized migration statistics to inform evidence-based policies. In response, the African Union's Executive Council adopted the second Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA II) in January 2018, setting the stage for a more coordinated approach to migration data.

Role of Specialized Technical Groups

To effectively implement SHaSA II, 18 specialized technical groups were formed, including the Specialized Technical Group on Demography, Migration, Health, Human Development, Social Protection & Gender (STG_SO). The STG_SO serves as a dedicated platform for statisticians from across the continent to strategize on producing and synchronizing statistics related to demography, migration, health, human development, social protection, and gender. Within the STG_SO, the Sub-Group on Migration focuses specifically on migration statistics. This sub-group (STG-Migration) is comprised of:

- Statisticians and other professionals from NSOs of the AU Member States.
- Representatives from Pan-African institutions (AUC, AfDB, UNECA, ACBF). Representatives from Regional Economic Communities (RECs).
- Representatives from regional and international organizations such as ILO and IOM.

Membership in the STG_SO is voluntary, with each group having a maximum of 25 members. A quorum of 15 members is required for official meetings. The African Union Commission (AUC) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) serve as the coordinating and secretarial entities for the STG_SO. The Sub-Group on Migration typically meets twice a year to provide regular feedback and drive improvements related to the harmonization and development of migration statistics in Africa. The STGs report to the Committee of Directors General of National Statistical Offices of AU Member States, the highest structure in charge of statistics on the continent.

13.2 Key Instruments for Migration Management

AU/IOM/ILO/ECA Joint Labour Migration Programme

This program directly addresses Africa's migration challenges by promoting safe, orderly, and regular labour migration through improved statistical cooperation and governance frameworks.

Revised Africa Migration Policy Framework (MPFA 2018-2030)

The MPFA provides comprehensive guidelines for migration governance, emphasizing the critical role of accurate and reliable data in crafting effective migration policies at both national and regional levels.

13.3 Collaborative Efforts and Challenges

Regional Economic Communities' Initiatives

Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are developing ways to improve migration management in their specific regions, often through the development of Regional Strategies for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) and regional migration guidelines. STATAFRIC collaborates with these RECs to support these efforts, assisting with data collection and harmonization.

Global Frameworks and Cooperation

The UN's Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration underscores a commitment to improving international migration governance. Achieving its objectives hinges on accurate data and requires strong collaboration among Member States and stakeholders. **The Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS**)

EGRISS works to improve the availability and quality of data on refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and stateless persons by developing international statistical standards and promoting their implementation. STATAFRIC is a member of the EGRISS Steering Committee, reflecting its commitment to improving statistics on displacement and statelessness in Africa.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations, provide a global framework for achieving a more sustainable and equitable world by 2030. STATAFRIC supports the monitoring of migration-related SDG indicators, particularly Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and its Target 10.7 (Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people). This involves working with member states to strengthen their capacity to collect and report data on key indicators such as the number of migrants, remittance flows, and the prevalence of human trafficking. By harmonizing migration statistics, STATAFRIC helps ensure that African countries can accurately track their progress towards achieving the SDGs.

Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)

The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) is a framework adopted by the United Nations to provide a more predictable and equitable sharing of responsibility for refugees. The GCR emphasizes the importance of data and evidence in developing effective responses to refugee situations. While direct STATAFRIC involvement in specific GCR initiatives may vary, its work on harmonizing refugee statistics and supporting member states in data collection is crucial for informing GCR implementation in Africa. This includes promoting the use of the International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics (IRRS) and supporting the development of national action plans that align with the GCR's objectives.

Action Agenda on Internal Displacement

The Action Agenda on Internal Displacement is an initiative aimed at achieving durable solutions for internally displaced persons (IDPs) by 2030. STAFRIC can potentially help member states measure, for instance, number of IDPS.

13.4 Capacity Building Initiatives

Capacity Building and Training Workshops

To enhance skills and knowledge in data collection and analysis, STATAFRIC conducts multiple capacity-building sessions for professionals from National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and related ministries. These workshops are often facilitated by collaborations with various partners. A key example is the series of Schools on Migration Statistics, organized four times, with the most recent edition in 2025.[52]

South-to-South Cooperation and Exchange

STATAFRIC actively promotes South-to-South cooperation as a mechanism for peer learning and knowledge sharing among African countries. This initiative enables member states to exchange best practices in statistical data management, fostering significant improvements and tailored solutions.

Addressing Statistical Shortages

Recognizing the need for investment in statistical infrastructure, STATAFRIC advocates for the allocation of resources towards state-of-the-art data collection and analysis tools. This ensures the consistent production of high-quality, reliable, and harmonized migration statistics.

13.5 Functions of STATAFRIC

STATAFRIC fulfills several key functions, solidifying its essential role in advancing statistical practices in member states:

1. Assemble harmonized statistical information to inform AU decisions.

2. Formulate and implement policies for statistical development.

3. Monitor the implementation of the African Charter on Statistics.

4. Coordinate SHaSA 2 implementation and reporting.

5. Promote statistical standards and methodologies.

6. Lead statistics production and stakeholder relationship management.

7. Provide technical assistance to national statistical offices.

8. Advocate for data-driven decision-making.

In addition to the above, STATAFRIC's can strengthen migration and displacement data across the continent through:

- Developing technical guidance on ethical data management in line with AU and UN standards.
- Building capacity within National Statistical Offices and ministries on managing secure and consent-based data systems.
- Supporting the integration of harmonized migration and displacement statistics in continental reporting frameworks with appropriate privacy and access safeguards in collaboration with statistical offices and relevant humanitarian actors.

52 4th African School on Migration Statistics - EGRISS

13.6 Data Exchange and STATAFRIC Database

The forthcoming centralized STATAFRIC database will significantly streamline migration data exchange among member states. This user-friendly resource, once operational, will facilitate in-depth analysis, improve data accessibility, and contribute to more informed decision-making on migration policies across the continent.

13.7 Migration and Displacement Regional Working Groups (RECs)

Establishing Regional Technical Working Groups

STATAFRIC supports the creation of regional working groups focused on migration and displacement. These groups enable experts from various countries to collaborate on common challenges associated with migration data collection and analysis. Currently, 7 out of 8 RECs have established such groups, reflecting positive impacts.

13.8 Establishing National Technical Working Groups

National Technical Working Groups (NTWGs) are strategically improving Member States' capacity to collect, analyse, and disseminate migration statistics effectively. NTWGs foster collaboration among statistics experts, government officials, and relevant stakeholders at the national level, promoting a more unified and coordinated approach to migration data management.

Objectives of National Technical Working Groups

- **Enhancing Data Quality:** Improve the accuracy, reliability, and timeliness of migration data through standardized methodologies and best practices.
- **Facilitating Coordination:** Strengthen the collaboration among various government departments and agencies involved in migration management for coherent data collection and analysis.
- **Promoting Best Practices:** Encourage the adoption of best practices aligning with national and international standards indata management, ensuring data quality and comparability.
- **Capacity Building:** Provide training and resources to enhance the analytical capabilities of statistical offices and relevant stakeholders, enabling them to effectively use migration data for policy formulation and monitoring.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Key policy documents adressing migration and displacement in africa

Document	Year	Relevance to these harmonisation guidelines
AU Agenda 2063 and the Second Ten Year Implementation Plan (2024–2033)	**2013**	The AU Agenda 2063 is the continent's strategic framework that aims to deliver on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development, and is a concrete manifestation of the pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. The Second 10-Year Implementation Plan (2024–2033), marks the beginning of the second decade of a collective effort to realise the vision of a prosperous, peaceful and integrated Africa by 2063.
Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018–2030) [53]	**2018**	The MPFA provides Member States and RECs with comprehensive policy guidelines and principles to assist them in the formulation and implementation of their own national and regional migration policies in accordance with their priorities and resources. **The MPFA is focused on eleven cross-cutting issues:** • Migration governance • Labour migration and education • Diaspora engagement • Border governance • Irregular migration • Forced displacement • Internal migration • Migration and trade
Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa 2017–2026 (ShaSA 2)	**2017**	ShaSA 2 is a continental strategy for the development of statistics in Africa, adopted by African leaders for the period 2017 to 2026. It aims to improve statistical coordination and collaboration among national statistical institutes, regional and continental organisations, as well as development partners. It builds on four strategic themes with strategic objectives.
OAU Convention governing the specific aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa 1969	**1969**	Adopted on 10 September 1969, in Addis Ababa, a landmark regional legal instrument that governs refugee protection in Africa. It complements the 1951 UN Refugee Convention by addressing Africa-specific refugee challenges. This convention entered into force in 1974 and remains a cornerstone of refugee protection in Africa.
African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention)	**2009**	To promote and strengthen regional and national measures to prevent or mitigate, prohibit and eliminate root causes of internal displacement, as well as provide for durable solutions.
		Establish a legal framework for preventing internal displacement and protecting and assisting internally displaced persons in Africa.
		Establish a legal framework for solidarity, cooperation and promotion of durable solutions, as well as mutual support between State Parties to combat displacement and address its consequences.
		Provide for the obligations and responsibilities for State Parties, with respect to the prevention of internal displacement and the protection of, and assistance to, internally displaced persons.
		Provide for the respective obligations, responsibilities and roles of armed groups, non-state actors and other relevant actors, including civil society organisations, with respect to the prevention of internal displacement and the protection of, and assistance to, internally displaced persons.

53 African Union Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018–2030). < https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/35956-doc-au-mpfa-executive-summary-eng.pdf> (accessed 10 November 2023).

Document	Year	Relevance to these harmonisation guidelines
African Charter on Human and People's Rights	**1981**	Also known as the Banjul Charter, the Charter is a regional human rights instrument that was adopted by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1981 and came into force in 1986. It aims to promote and protect human rights and freedoms across the African continent.
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	**1990**	The ACRWC is a regional human rights treaty adopted by the Organization of African Unity on 11 July 1990, entering into force in November 1999. It was created to address the unique socio-cultural and economic realities affecting children in Africa, complementing the global UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
Constitutive Act of the African Union	**2000**	The Constitutive Act of the African Union, adopted on 11 July 2000 in Lomé, Togo, and entering into force on 26 May 2001, is the initial legal document that established the African Union (AU), replacing the Organization of African Unity (OAU).
Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment	**2018**	The Protocol is a milestone agreement adopted by the African Union on 29 January 2018. It aims to facilitate deeper integration across African countries by enabling citizens to move, reside and establish businesses freely across Member States
Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area	**2018**	The Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a treaty adopted by the African Union to create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of businesspersons and investments. It was adopted in Kigali, Rwanda, in March 2018 and entered into force in May 2019.
African Charter of Statistics	**2009**	The African Charter on Statistics (ACS) is a foundational legal instrument adopted by the African Union to guide statistical development across the continent. The goal is to establish a harmonised framework for the production, dissemination and use of statistics in Africa, ensuring they are reliable, timely and relevant for policymaking and development. The Charter was adopted in Addis Ababa in February 2009 and entered into force in February 2015.
1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol	**1951** **1967**	The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol are foundational instruments in international refugee law, defining who qualifies as a refugee and outlining the rights of refugees and the legal obligations of states. The Refugee Convention was adopted in Geneva in July 1951 and entered into force in April 1954. The 1967 Protocol was adopted in New York in January 1967 and entered into force in October that same year, with the purpose of removing the temporal and geographic limitations of the 1951 Convention.
1954 Convention relating to the status of Stateless people	**1954**	The 1954 Convention is an international treaty adopted in September 1954 to address the rights and protections of individuals who are not recognised as nationals by any country under its laws.