

Statistical Commission
Fifty-fourth session
28th February – 3rd March 2023
Item 4(e) of the provisional agenda
**Items for decision: Refugee, Internally
Displaced Persons and Statelessness Statistics**

Background Document
Available in English only

**2022 Meeting of the Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS):
Delivering on our Mandate and Looking to the Future.**

Meeting Readout

Prepared by the Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS) Secretariat



2022 Meeting of the Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS): Delivering on our Mandate and Looking to the Future

Meeting Readout

Introduction

This document provides a summary of the 2022 Meeting of the Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS): Delivering on our Mandate and Looking to the Future. This report was developed by the EGRISS Secretariat and serves as a background document to the *Report of the Expert Group on Refugee, Internally Displaced Persons and Statelessness Statistics on statelessness statistics*¹ and thus aims to supplement information included in this report regarding the EGRISS' programme of work.



About the Meeting

The Expert Group meeting was held on 12th- 14th December 2022 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and was made possible through generous financial contributions from UNHCR and other stakeholders including the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.

¹ The Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS), Report of the Expert Group on Refugee, Internally Displaced Persons and Statelessness Statistics on statelessness statistics, December 2022, available at: https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session_54/documents/2023-22-EGRISS-EE.pdf

The meeting included active participation from the EGRISS membership and incorporated key note addresses from the following speakers: Ato Muluken Kere, Deputy Director General, Ethiopian Statistics Service; Oliver Chinganya, Director, UNECA African Centre for Statistics; and Tarek Abou Chabake, Chief Statistician, UNHCR.

The meeting was conducted mid-way through the EGRISS' current mandate and occurred at a critical moment in history as the world faces an unprecedented scale of forced displacement. At this unique juncture, the all-members meeting successfully brought together 110 in-person/virtual participants² from across EGRISS' membership to take stock of progress and discuss the possibility of a future mandate beyond 2024. Specifically, the meeting had the following key objectives³:

1. Take stock on progress/achievements against the 2020-2024 TOR (third mandate)⁴ and identify gaps still to be filled.
2. Provide a platform to discuss/share recent EGRISS products e.g., E-learning (expected October 2023), *Compilers' Manual*⁵ (expected December 2023) and the *International Recommendation on Statelessness Statistics* (IROSS)⁶ recommendations (expected March 2023).
3. Exchange experiences and lessons learned between countries and other stakeholders concerning the implementation of the *International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics* (IRRS)⁷ and the *International Recommendations on Internally Displaced Persons Statistics* (IRIS)⁸ and identify gaps/recurring challenges that need to be addressed.
4. Identify ways to strengthen collective efforts to achieve stated goals of the 2020-2024 TOR, and feed these into priorities for 2023-2024 and Technical Subgroups workplans.
5. Discuss relevance and focus of a potential fourth EGRISS mandate, beyond 2024.

The meeting agenda⁹ was developed with the intention to create space for EGRISS members to share and learn from each other's experiences. More specifically, the agenda comprised the following:

- **Day 1** – the focus was to take stock on current progress of the EGRISS against its TOR. Interventions from Georgia, Mexico, Morocco and South Sudan highlighted the unique role and added value of the EGRISS and provided an opportunity to learn about the current successes and challenges faced by countries. Additionally, working groups centred around EGRISS'

² Representatives from the following countries and international organisations were present at the 2022 Meeting of the Expert Group: Armenia, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Cote D'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Kenya, Kosovo, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sweden, Turkey, Uganda, USA, Uzbekistan, Zimbabwe, IGAD, ESCAP, IDMC, IOM, JDC, JIPS, Statafric, UNECA, UN-ESCWA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNSD and the World Bank.

³ The 2022 Meeting of the EGRISS concept note can be found here: https://egrisstats.org/wp-content/uploads/Concept-note_2022-Meeting-of-the-Expert-Group-on-Refugee-IDP-and-Statelessness-Statistics.pdf

⁴ The EGRISS' third mandate: <https://egrisstats.org/wp-content/uploads/BG-item-3n-terms-of-reference-for-EGRIS-E.pdf>

⁵ The *Compilers' Manual* can be found here: <https://egrisstats.org/activities/compilers-manual/>

⁶ The International Recommendation on Statelessness Statistics was submitted to the fifty-fourth Statistical Commission for endorsement. More information concerning the IROSS can be found here: <https://egrisstats.org/recommendations/international-recommendations-on-statelessness-statistics-iross/>

⁷ The Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS), *International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics* (IRRS), March 2018, available at: <https://egrisstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/International-Recommendations-on-Refugee-Statistics.pdf>

⁸ The Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS), *International Recommendations on Internally Displaced Persons Statistics* (IRIS), March 2020, available at: <https://egrisstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/The-International-Recommendations-on-IDP-Statistics.pdf>

⁹ The 2022 Meeting of the EGRISS agenda can be found here, available at: https://egrisstats.org/wp-content/uploads/EGRISS-Meeting-Final-Agenda_final-without-links.pdf

latest/upcoming products (e.g., the revised *Compilers' Manual* and E-learning platform) provided the opportunity to discuss their purpose, identify areas of improvement and plan for effective dissemination with members.

- **Day 2** – the emphasis was placed on participants sharing experiences and lessons learnt from their efforts to implement the IRRS and IRIS using census, surveys, administrative data and other sources. A mixture of session formats, such as an interactive poster gallery session, panel discussion and thematic working groups aimed to cultivate a creative environment and facilitate the active participation of attendees.
- **Day 3** – the primary objective was to build upon the experiences gained from members and look to the future of the EGRISS, beyond 2024. An interactive plenary session enabled participants to voice their opinions concerning the continuation of EGRISS' mandate. Building on ideas from colleagues, subgroup meetings were held to initiate the development of workplans for 2023-2024.

Main Outcomes

The main outcomes of the meeting are presented here according to each objective, although some outcomes apply to more than one objective.

1) **Take stock on progress/achievements against the 2020-2024 TOR (third mandate) and identify gaps still to be filled.**

An opportunity to reflect on the progress and achievements of the EGRISS occurred during the meeting. Against its current mandate, it became clear that much has already been achieved, such as the development of the EGRISS website, and ongoing capacity development activities with partners and organisational representatives that continue to raise awareness of the recommendations and support implementation. The growth of EGRISS membership¹⁰ (now including 55 countries) and progress made to implement the recommendations in so many national contexts also present significant achievements for the group. Additionally, the technical guidance offered through the *Compilers' Manual* and the development of the IROSS - a tool that aims to support countries to improve official statistics on statelessness - were highlighted as key markers of progress against the current TOR.

Notwithstanding the clear progress made, gaps related to the third mandate were identified. For example, the need for more work on administrative data systems was emphasised, alongside an increased focus on the provision of technical support to countries requesting implementation assistance. Additionally, avenues to support countries build technical capacity and strengthening the alignment of efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Compact for Refugees were identified as additional gaps in the current mandate. The need to translate the recommendations and other relevant guidance documents into other UN languages was also highlighted.

Limited resources and coordination challenges were highlighted as significant factors that hinder EGRISS' ability to fully realise its current objectives. However, opportunities to address these were identified including building on political momentum surrounding the inclusion of refugees and IDPs in national systems (e.g., through the Global Refugee Compact and upcoming Forum, Agenda 2030 and SG's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement), the ongoing 2020 census round, and operational alignment with investments to improve migration statistics.

¹⁰ See EGRISS membership list/map here: [Membership - EGRISS \(egrisstats.org\)](https://egrisstats.org)

2) Provide a platform to discuss/share recent/upcoming EGRISS products

Space was allotted within the agenda to collectively discuss EGRISS products and explore opportunities for their further improvement/dissemination. Group discussions highlighted the participation of members in EGRISS activities and strong interest in certain products, demonstrating the continued relevance of the Expert Group’s work. Table 1 presents the objectives and key outcomes from these working groups.

Table 1: Working Groups on EGRISS products

Working Group	Objective	Key Takeaway
E-learning	Discuss and develop a dissemination plan for the EGRISS e-learning on the International Recommendation on Refugee and IDP Statistics.	The importance of providing the E-learning tools to countries/institutions was made clear and suggestions were collected for dissemination of the course in 2023.
Compilers’ Manual	Initiate the EGRISS-wide review process of the finalised Compilers’ Manual.	Broad confirmation and buy-in from members concerning the revision of the Compilers’ Manual and awareness raised about the upcoming EGRISS-wide review, including commitments to contribute with case studies.
International Recommendation on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS)	Discuss the feedback received from the Global Consultation on the IROSS and how it should be addressed, and initiate plans for engagement at the UN Statistical Commission in February/March 2023.	Consensus developed on key areas of feedback from the global consultation to address including availability of data to produce statistics on certain populations categories and the need to ensure global relevance of the recommendations given the different contexts and capacity levels. Strong support for the IROSS was demonstrated.
Measuring the end of displacement for statistical purposes	Advance the maturation and encourage the application of the IRIS “composite measure” for taking persons out of the statistical stock of IDPs.	Relevance of work was confirmed and discussion initiated on next steps beyond empirical analysis paper to support operationalisation of recommendations.
Regional dissemination and capacity development	Recognise regional and country engagement and capacity development efforts in EGRISS to date and lay the foundation for a proposed way forward.	The importance of utilising regional entry points (and EGRISS members working at the regional level), such as regional commissions and organisational bureaux, to raise awareness of the recommendations, support capacity development at the national level and foster regional networks of practitioners working on forced displacement statistics.

Standardising identification questions for refugees and IDPs	Discuss challenges and solutions for identification of refugees and IDPs in household surveys and censuses for official statistics.	High expectations from countries regarding the completion of this work and the importance of these questions to support implementation of the IRRS and IRIS. Feedback on drafts discussed and consolidated.
---	---	---

Among the EGRISS products under development, members eagerly anticipated the *Compilers' Manual*, E-learning, identification questions for refugees and IDPs, and the IROSS, which were highlighted as items of particular importance to countries. More specifically, interest was expressed towards the revised *Compilers' Manual*, which was positioned as an essential tool that will strongly support countries' efforts to implement the recommendations.



3) Exchange experiences and lessons learned between countries and other stakeholders concerning the implementation of the IRRS and the IRIS and identify gaps/recurring challenges that need to be addressed.

The meeting provided a unique opportunity to exchange implementation experiences and learn from the successes and challenges encountered by peers. During these exchanges, interventions from countries highlighted the progress made in regard to the utilisation of different data sources to transform the recommendations into practice. For example, countries shared their experiences of using guidance from the IRRS to include refugees in recent national censuses through both traditional methods and combined approaches using registers and surveys. Others discussed efforts to incorporate refugees into national household surveys (such as the Demographic and Health Survey, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys and other socio-economic surveys), ongoing efforts to integrate data form different administrative data sources to strengthen analysis of internal displacement, and endeavours to develop sectoral statistical development

strategies and establish new platforms to improve coordination around the production of statistics on IDPs, refugees and stateless populations.

Despite the many success stories shared, participants took the opportunity of meeting in person to discuss challenges faced and seek advice from peers. Common challenges encountered by practitioners whilst implementing the recommendations, regardless of country context or capacity level, became apparent throughout deliberations. In particular, issues related to coordination at the national level, political sensitivities related to statistical inclusion of vulnerable groups, limited trust in government and associated low-response rates were highlighted as challenges that significantly hinder efforts to work across sectors and better include refugees, IDPs and stateless persons in national statistical systems. Additionally, colleagues reflected on the impacts of limited data sharing and accessibility, particularly in regard to administrative data sources, their statistical capacity needs and how these challenges can present substantial barriers to progress.

Further discussions identified recommendations to help address the aforementioned challenges. Based on participants' testimony, the recommendations themselves were presented not only as a source of useful technical guidance, but as an advocacy tool that can be used to raise the profile of refugee and IDP statistics at the national level. Moreover, increased visibility of participation in EGRISS and other relevant regional/international groups and processes can have a clear impact of progress at the national level. Furthermore, the added value of well-coordinated regional and international support was emphasised, particularly as it relates to providing technical and practical support to strengthen countries' statistical capacity and improve the implementation of the recommendations.

4) Identify ways to strengthen collective efforts to achieve stated goals of the 2020-2024 TOR, and feed these into priorities for 2023-2024 and Technical Subgroups workplans.

Subgroup members met with co-leads to discuss workplans for 2023-2024 building on achievements made during the last year and insights garnered through the meeting in Addis Ababa. In case new ideas for activities were identified as well as continued support to enhance ongoing efforts. Draft workplans for each of EGRISS' subgroups are expected in early 2023 and will be reviewed by EGRISS Steering Committee. In each case, additional EGRISS members indicated interest to join membership of technical subgroups.

5) Discuss relevance and focus of a potential fourth EGRISS mandate, beyond 2024.

The voices of countries and institutional partners within the EGRISS membership are central to governing how the Expert Group functions and determines its priority activities. The group's current mandate from the UN Statistical Commission provides a framework for these efforts and will come to an end at the end of 2024. The meeting provided an opportunity for members to share their perspectives concerning a possible extension to EGRISS' mandate beyond 2024. Overall, there was unanimous support concerning the continuation of EGRISS' mandate with a proposal to extend to 2030 articulated. Primarily, colleagues agreed that a new mandate should continue to focus on existing priorities such as the implementation of the refugee and IDP recommendations (extending this to statelessness should the IROSS be endorsed), national capacity development and strengthening the alignment of efforts to Agenda 2030 to enhance the visibility of forcibly displaced and stateless persons in this context. In addition, discussions also highlighted the importance of learning from the current mandate and broadening the groups' perspective to engaging with other closely associated issues. Above all, colleagues echoed the sentiment that the EGRISS should continue to serve as a hub where members can gather, share knowledge and learn from each other's experiences.