IMPROVING STATISTICS ON FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND STATELESSNESS:

EMERGING LESSONS FROM COUNTRY IMPLEMENTATION

53rd Session of the UN Statistical Commission Side Event
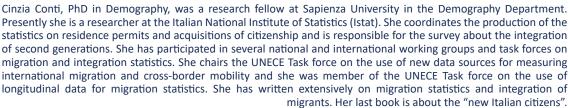
Event Read-Out

February 2022

Speakers

Opening Remarks: Mr. Abdulkadir Amin Awes
Director Population and Social Statistics, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS)

Mr. Abdulkadir Amin Awes holds a Master of Arts degree in Economic Policy Management (EPM) from Makerere University of Kampala (MUK), Master of Science in Population Studies from University of Nairobi, Bachelor of Arts (Second Class Honors, Upper Division) from University of Nairobi and Diploma on Decentralized Planning for Rural Development from National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad (India). He has over 29 years' experience in public service in the areas of Statistics, Economic planning, HIV/AIDs, monitoring and evaluation. He joined KNBS as a Senior Manager in charge of social statistics. He has been involved in the production of various plans and statistical publications, which include, District Poverty Reduction Paper, District Development Plans, Annual Economic Survey reports, Annual Statistical Abstract reports and County Statistical Abstracts. He has a vast experience in planning, designing, coordinating and providing technical expertise in various national surveys and population and housing censuses (1999, 2009 and 2019). He authored a number of survey and census reports.

Ms. Cinzia Conti
Senior Researcher, Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat)

Cinzia Conti, PhD in Demography, was a research fellow at Sapienza University in the Demography Department. Presently she is a researcher at the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat). She coordinates the production of the statistics on residence permits and acquisitions of citizenship and is responsible for the survey about the integration of second generations. She has participated in several national and international working groups and task forces on migration and integration statistics. She chairs the UNECE Task force on the use of new data sources for measuring international migration and cross-border mobility and she was member of the UNECE Task force on the use of longitudinal data for migration statistics. She has written extensively on migration statistics and integration of migrants. Her last book is about the "new Italian citizens".

Ms. Alejandra Ríos Cázares
Adjunct General Director of Development, Analysis and Indicator of Government, National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) of Mexico

Alejandra Ríos Cázares holds a MPhil and a PhD in political science from the University of California San Diego. Since August 2019, she is on academic leave from the Department of Public Administration at the Center for Economics Teaching and Research (CIDE) and currently works as Deputy General Director of Development, Analysis and Government Indicators at the National Institute of Statistics and Geography - Mexico (INEGI). Her work is focused on comparative analysis of institutions, political development, government accountability, gender institutions and subnational politics. She has worked on academic projects related to justice reform in Mexico, government accountability, government transparency, subnational politics, institutions for the advancement of women, and gender violence. She is part of the National System of Researchers.

Ms. Renice Akinyi Bunde
Assistant Manager Population Statistics, Governance, Peace and Security Statistics, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS)

Ms. Renice Akinyi Bunde has been working with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics for nine years. She is currently serving as an Assistant Manager in Population Statistics. Renice has served as a Statistician in Governance, Peace and Security Statistics where she handled statistics on human rights for the vulnerable population especially persons with disability, forcibly displaced, women and girls, children, street families and the elderly. She also handled statistics on crime, social protection, participation in decision making among others. She is a champion for inclusive data. Renice had also served as a County Statistics Officer in Migori County located in the Western Region of Kenya. She holds both Master and Bachelor's Degree in Applied Statistics from Maseno University. She is currently doing her PhD in Population Studies at the University of Nairobi.

Ms. Anna Eriksson
Long-term Advisor to STATAFRIC, Statistics Sweden

Anna is working as a long-term advisor at AUC/STATAFRIC in Tunis, within a cooperation between STATAFRIC, Statistics Sweden and four Regional Economic Communities in Africa aiming at strengthening capacities in migration statistics. Anna has a long working history in social statistics, in national, regional and international organisations. She has in depth experience from working at the Swedish NSO (Statistics Sweden) in the areas of population, migration, education and labour market statistics. At Statistics Sweden she has been a project leader for assignments carried out in collaboration with the EU and the OECD in migration- and education statistics. Anna has also been a UN-employee for 13-years, appointed both at the UNESCO HQ and in a field office in Africa as an expert in capacity development in social statistics, notably the area of education management information systems (EMIS).

Moderator: Ms. Natalia Krynsky Baal
Head of the Secretariat of the Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS)

Event Background

Since the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) endorsed the **International Recommendations on Refugee and IDP Statistics (IRRS and IRIS)** in 2018 and 2020 respectively, many countries have taken concrete steps towards their implementation at national level. These efforts have taken a variety of forms – some focus on inclusion in national censuses, others on surveys or administrative data systems, and still others are exploring more experimental methods. However, each one of these examples contribute to our collective goal to ensure vulnerable populations, including those forcibly displaced and stateless, are not left behind as we work to achieve the **Sustainable Development Goals**.

Despite challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic on primary data collection efforts, there is currently a growing momentum around the usage of the Refugee and IDP statistical recommendations. On the 10th of February 2022, the **Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS)** convened the side event **"Improving Statistics on Forced Displacement and Statelessness: Emerging Lessons from Country Implementation"** to showcase a selection of examples and provide a platform for countries to share their technical knowledge and experiences in this regard. It also aimed at drawing attention to the Group's ongoing efforts to develop **International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics (IROSS)** as well as to invest in capacity development of national statistical systems (NSSs) through strategic partnerships to further implementation in the years ahead under its 2020-2024 mandate. The side event was therefore connected to agenda item 3a on Data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and item 3f on Civil registration, vital statistics and statelessness statistics where the **"Report of the EGRISS on statelessness statistics"** will be presented.

By shedding light on examples from refugee, IDP and statelessness contexts from the perspective of practitioners working in national statistical systems, the session showcased experiences from countries, which are actively pursuing steps to put the recommendations into practice. It brought together an expert panel, moderated by the Head of the EGRISS Secretariat, including speakers from the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat), the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) of Mexico, and Statistics Sweden to share their examples and lessons learned. The side event provided an important platform for peer-to-peer learning around the initiatives taking place at the national level and understanding how the IROSS can support national statistical offices in the production of statelessness statistics once endorsed. Nearly 100 participants from NSSs, civil society, and regional and international organizations joined the discussions. This represents one of the multiple efforts of the Expert Group to create global and regional spaces for dialogue between relevant actors working with forced displacement and statelessness statistics.

During the event, cooperation and partnerships were highlithed as critical aspects to improve official statistics on forcibly displaced and stateless groups. In addition, NSOs cited the importance of statistical standards such as the International Recommendations on Refugee and IDP Statistics to provide the necessary tools and guidance for the collection and production of official statistics on these population groups.

Event highlights

Opening Remarks

The inclusion of forcibly displaced and statelessness people in regular statistical production can provide relevant and sustainable information about the socioeconomic situation of these population groups and allow better understanding of trends and dynamics of displacement and statelessness. Quality evidence can, therefore, support making these groups visible in development processes and reaching the commitment of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind.

However, the lack of technical capacity in the area remains a key challenge in the production of timely and disaggregated official statistics on refugees, IDPs, and stateless populations. Capacity development is crucial to provide national statistical systems with the necessary tools for improved data on these vulnerable groups. The international statistical community has a key role in fostering the implementation of international statistical frameworks, such as the IRRS and IRIS, by indicating national statistical offices the path and means to it through capacity strengthening. If done in accordance with national needs and in conjunction with national statistical offices, these activities can result in improved and relevant data for policymaking.

> *"We look forward to hearing more about other implementation examples and appreciate the efforts of the Expert Group to create global and regional spaces for dialogue and peer-to-peer learning between different actors in the area. These efforts are critical to support strengthening capacity of national, regional and international actors."*– Mr. Abdulkadir Amin Awes

Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat)

Istat shared their experiences on the use of **administrative data** on **refugees and asylums seekers** for the production of official statistics. The presentation emphasized the importance of overcoming false dichotomies in the area and promoting the cooperation between relevant ministries, institutions, and NSOs to improve the quality of the administrative data and its use for statistical purposes. In this case, the International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics (IRRS) have been instrumental to foster dialogue between Istat and the Ministry of Interior, such as on the topic of integration of refugees.

> *"[The IRRS] helped us in setting the study of the integration of refugees and asylum seekers as a priority inside the institute but also in the cooperation with the Ministry. The recommendations, in fact, overcame the question of the definitions and quantification of people seeking international protection."* – Cinzia Conti

The example shared by Italy demonstrates that beyond providing guidance and statistical standards for the collection of data on refugees, the IRRS represented a critical tool and platform to support change of perceptions and priorities within the cooperation between the national statistical office and the Ministry of Interior.

> *"The development of statistical systems does not always consider refugees and asylum seekers as a target population. It is essential the role played by international recommendations and regulations to underline that refugees and asylum seekers deserve specific statistics and peculiar indicators possibly through a longitudinal approach."* – Cinzia Conti

Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS)

KNBS's presentation equally illustrated the importance of working together with different national institutions and international organizations to produce improved information on **refugees and stateless** people through its experience with the **2019 population and housing census and household surveys**. Kenya shared some of the challenges and lessons learned in the collection of data on these population groups, including the difficulties in identifying those who are refugees and stateless. The presentation highlighted that, despite the challenges, it is possible to include these populations groups in regular data collection exercises. It also emphasized the importance of statistical standards in the area to guide NSOs in the production of official statistics, including how KNBS is supporting the development of the IROSS through its expertise on statelessness statistics. Finally, the presentation shed light on the usefulness of better information to support policy change, such as the **2019 Shona study**, which informed the provision of citizenship to the stateless Shona community.

> *"The big lesson we learned here is that it is not all that easy to reach the forcibly displaced, so a lot of advocacy needs to be done, and a lot of efforts need to put when it comes to collecting information about this important group. But what worked best for us is collaboration between our institution and other institutions, to put our hands together to see how to collect this information."* – Renice Akinyi Bunde

National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) of Mexico

The importance of coordination for improved statistics on internal displacement was also emphasized in the presentation of **INEGI** on the **Pilot Survey to Characterize the Population in a Situation of Internal Forced Displacement in the State of Chihuahua** in 2021. As **Mexico** is a federal republic composed by several states, collaboration between different institutions, levels of government, and actors was key in the development and implementation of the survey. The project is still ongoing and aims at providing information on the magnitude and characteristics of the people who were **internally displaced** due to violence in the state of Chihuahua. The International Recommendations on IDP Statistics were used to inform the development of the questionnaire and selection of indicators. The results of the survey will be critical to support better understanding of the phenomenon and inform policymaking for the internally displaced in the Chihuahua region.

> *"[…] This information could be used as a basis for the construction of government responses to protect and attend in an integral, adequate, undifferentiated, and effective manner the internally displaced population of the state [of Chihuahua]".* – Alejandra Rios Cazares

Statistics Sweden (SCB)

Statistics Sweden, through its cooperation on migration statistics with StatAfric, has been a key ally to build knowledge of African NSOs on the International Recommendations on Refugee and IDP Statistics. Based on its long-standing experience on **statistical capacity development**, Statistics Sweden shared key insights in the area, including the importance of investing in long-term partnerships, relying on partners' goals and strategies to ensure their engagement and ownership, and promoting peer-to-peer learning between experts in a south-to-south approach.

"[...] The sustainability of the capacity is essential. That is, the partners need to receive the skills, so that they can continue the work even after the project is finished. And to reach sustainability, there needs to be real partnerships and ownership. They are central aspects. The cooperation really needs to build on the drivers of the partners and their motivation to collaborate. [...] And by the long-term perspective, the aim is to achieve organizational change rather than individual change." – Anna Eriksson

Key Takeaways

The lessons shared by speakers during the event provided valuable insights to those working in the area of forced displacement and statelessness statistics. Here are a few takeways:

- Coordination and partnerships, especially between national institutions, are fundamental to ensure synergy of efforts in the area of forced displacement and statelessness statistics.

- International statistical standards such as the IRRS and IRIS provide critical guidance and key advocacy tools for the inclusion of refugees and IDPs in regular data collection exercises such as administrative registries, censuses, and household surveys.

- Similar to both sets of recommendations on Refugee and IDP statistics, once endorsed, the IROSS will offer practioners statistical standards and definitions for improved data collection on stateless populations.

- Reliable official statistics on forcibly displaced and stateless people are essential to inform policymaking and implementation and ensure these groups are visible in development processes and 2030 Agenda plans.

- The statistical community has an important role, including EGRISS initiatives, in supporting the implementation of the IRRS and IRIS through capacity development of national statistical systems.

- Peer-to-peer learning platforms are a powerful tool and effective mechanism for contributing to improve statistics on forced displacement and statelessness as countries learn from and are inspired by the activities of others.

For more information on these activities, please reach out to the EGRISS Secretariat at egrisstats@unhcr.org or visit our website.