

**Statement submitted by the  
International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP)  
Strengthening migration data, research and training, in the context  
of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**

The following statement is being submitted by the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) as an input to the development of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Member States of the United Nations committed to develop such an agreement at the high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, held on 19 September 2016. In resolution 71/280, the General Assembly invited all relevant stakeholders, including scientific and knowledge-based institutions, to contribute to the preparatory process of elaborating the migration compact. In response to that invitation, the IUSSP formed the Ad Hoc Panel on Strengthening Migration Data and Research, which prepared the statement presented here.

The Ad Hoc Panel was convened on 26 September 2017. It held six telephone conferences from 2 October until 16 November 2017, and several of its members participated in a panel discussion about the draft statement that took place on 30 October, during the International Population Conference held in Cape Town, South Africa. After presenting a preliminary version during the panel discussion, the draft statement was shared with the entire IUSSP membership as part of an electronic consultation that took place between 5 and 15 November. The statement was subsequently revised between 17 and 27 November, and the final version was endorsed on 29 November by the IUSSP Council on behalf of the organization's 1873 members living in 121 countries.

The Panel was composed of the following scholars:

- Philippe Fargues, European University Institute, Florence, Italy - Chair of the Panel
- Marla Asis, Scalabrini Migration Center, Manila, The Philippines
- Mariama Awumbila, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana
- Marcella Cerrutti, Centro de Estudios de Población, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Mohammad Jalal Abbasi-Shavazi, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran
- Fernando Lozano, Centro Regional de Investigaciones Multidisciplinarias, Cuernavaca, México
- Ellen Percy Kraly, Colgate University, Hamilton, New York, USA
- Emilio Zagheni, University of Washington, Seattle, USA
- Bela Hovy and Keiko Osaki, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs - Ex-officio

## **Preamble**

1. International migration is a key dimension of the global exchange between peoples. It connects each country of the world with all the others, as every state with no exception is at the same time a receiver and a sender of migrants.
2. Social science research supports the conclusion that, without migration, our world would be economically poorer and culturally less diverse and less creative. More research is needed, however, to improve our understanding of how individuals and states can best take advantage of the opportunities migration offers and address its challenges for governments, societies and individuals in full respect of the human rights of the persons involved.
3. Because migration across national borders is truly a global phenomenon, there is a shared interest in establishing robust evidence to inform discussions, to lower the temperature of heated policy debates and to enable sound policymaking to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration. Building a global evidence base to guide this discussion requires that states share basic concepts and agree on the importance of achieving compatibility between national data systems.
4. In response to the growing divide in today's world between those who regard international migration as beneficial for economies and a necessity for human progress and those who regard it as a threat to social cohesion, cultural identity and national security, the scientific community should agree on a research agenda for the coming decades, drawing on the considerable knowledge accumulated in recent decades and guided by an agreed set of priorities concerning both fundamental and policy-oriented research.

## **Recommendations for developing and sharing definitions and concepts**

5. Achieving universal consensus on the definition of an international migrant, building on statistical concepts and definitions established under the aegis of the United Nations Statistical Commission, is an important objective on its own.
6. Information that must be collected to identify and count international migrants includes a person's country of birth and country of citizenship.
7. Other relevant characteristics should be collected as well, including:
  - Date of arrival or duration of stay, in order to differentiate migrants from simple travellers, and short-term from long-term migrants.
  - Countries of birth and/or citizenship of a person's father and mother, in order to identify sub-populations with a recent migrant background, such as second- or third-generation migrants, diasporas, etc., as these groups are often targets of specific policies.
  - Reason for migrating, in order to differentiate between groups of migrants on that basis.
8. The voluntary or forced nature of the move should be determined in order to differentiate between a voluntary migrant and an asylum seeker or refugee. It is often as simple travellers or voluntary migrants that persons fleeing persecution or life-threatening conditions enter the countries where they will lodge an asylum claim and thus begin a lengthy process of refugee status determination.

9. Irregular migration should be addressed properly by distinguishing between three non-exclusive situations — unauthorized entry, unauthorized stay and unauthorized employment — all of them transient and susceptible to change in both directions.
10. The notion of “mixed flows” used to describe refugees travelling alongside economic migrants without visas refers not only to two distinct populations travelling or being smuggled together, but also to mixed motivations, as the same individual may seek both protection and a job.

### **Recommendations for strengthening migration data**

11. Countries should agree on a set of minimum standards for data collection and dissemination to permit the measurement of migrant flows and stocks and to document essential characteristics of migrants.
12. Countries should work towards the objective of counting migrant flows and stocks by both origin and destination of the migrants.
13. Censuses, which are the main source of data on stocks of immigrants and returnees, should include questions on country of birth and country of citizenship for all persons, supplemented with questions on country of residence five years prior to the census (useful to capture recent migration as well as return migration) and the most recent arrival date (to estimate migration trends).
14. Because emigrants are absent from origin countries, their numbers and characteristics must be reconstructed by aggregating immigrants of a given origin in all other countries of the world. To this end, all countries should agree to count all residents by country of origin (birth and/or citizenship) and to make such data available with full detail by country.
15. Administrative sources including border records, visas and residence permits should be utilized and adapted, as necessary, to provide data on migrant flows.
16. In order to disentangle migrants from travellers and to capture various forms of temporary and circular migration, statistics on visas and residence permits should be provided by date of arrival.
17. In order to continuously update statistics of migrant flows and stocks by origin/destination and basic characteristics of migrants, countries should work together to match entry and exit data.
18. Other administrative sources, including data collected in hospitals, schools, labour offices, housing offices, tribunals, etc., should include standardized information on country of birth and country of citizenship and be utilized to provide data on the socioeconomic inclusion of migrants. Assessing differences in outcomes between migrants and non-migrants provides critical information on distinctive behaviours and circumstances, including possible discrimination against migrants.
19. Countries should take advantage of routinely conducted surveys to collect migration data, in particular the following:
  - Multi-purpose household surveys to collect information on the socioeconomic integration of immigrants, including integration into the labour market.
  - Post-census surveys to collect representative information on immigrant populations and possibly migratory and labour trajectories.
20. A standard migration module that contains key questions to identify migrants and record relevant characteristics should be developed and appended to existing household

surveys, to help make data on migration derived from surveys internationally comparable.

21. Irregular migration should be measured and monitored. Because migrants in an irregular situation tend to be absent from administrative routines and official surveys, indirect methods should be developed to approximate their numbers and characteristics.
22. New tools should be developed to capture and analyse the status and living conditions of migrants in transit.
23. Countries should provide researchers with access to census micro-data, with appropriate protections for individual privacy, as these are the only comprehensive source for comparing the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of population groups defined by migrant status, including non-migrants.
24. Big data, including from social media, potentially contain a wealth of information about the mobility of individuals. Significant further developments are needed, however, to achieve standardized methods and ensure responsible use of such information.
25. Governments and other stakeholders should consider launching a World Migration Survey, which would be a timely initiative.
26. Dedicated funding should be made available to support developing countries in the production, use and dissemination of migration-related data.

#### **Recommendations for developing research on migration**

27. States and academic institutions should increase efforts to gather data and conduct research on migration, including its remote and proximate causes, and its short- and long-term consequences in origin and destination countries, as well as globally.
28. Migration and development are linked in many ways, and a better understanding of the complex processes at work is needed in order to recommend actions to promote the positive impacts of migration and to mitigate its negative consequences, in both origin and destination countries. Remittances, ideas and values conveyed by migrants to families and communities in the country of origin, and equitable opportunities for migrant women are key topics.
29. Migrants often belong to two countries, where they come from and where they now reside. The impact of transnational links as well as diaspora policies developed by states and non-state actors in origin countries to foster ties with expatriate nationals should be evaluated.
30. Researchers should seek to establish whether and to what extent the departure of highly skilled migrants deprives the source country of a scarce resource necessary for its development, and whether skills gained abroad and then brought back to the country by returning migrants, as well as other compensatory mechanisms, can turn the “brain drain” into a “brain gain”.
31. Researchers should seek to assess the contribution of migration to building human capital globally, at a time when students, teachers and researchers comprise a growing share of international migrants worldwide.
32. Migrants’ inclusion in receiving societies, including the extent to which they have rights, duties, opportunities and responsibilities comparable to those of natives, is a multifaceted process combining economic, social, cultural and legal dimensions. Researchers should work to develop a migrant integration index that would make it possible to monitor one of the most sensitive and consequential outcomes of migration.

33. Migrants can be victims of discrimination, unfair treatment, racism, xenophobia and exclusion in their host societies in relation to personal characteristics such as national origin, religion, physical appearance, name and surname, etc. To combat discrimination, intolerance and related phenomena, researchers should develop methods of identifying such acts and measuring their frequency.
34. Migrants can experience abuse and exploitation at the initial stage of migration, as when they fall victim to exorbitant charges, illegal recruitment, smuggling under inhuman conditions or human trafficking in origin or transit countries. To assist in combatting such abuse, researchers should develop specific methods for identifying such practices and documenting their consequences.
35. Researchers should continue to investigate the impact of migration on the demography of destination countries and the role of immigration as a partial response to the challenges posed by population ageing, including labour and skills shortages and the rising costs of pension and health care systems.
36. Longitudinal analyses of the effects of migration on fertility and reproductive decision-making among women and men should be developed further to contribute to our understanding of how international migration, social mobility and demographic processes are linked in populations of origin and destination.
37. Women migrants and unaccompanied child migrants are vulnerable populations with specific needs. Research on how gender and age shape the reasons for migrating, and on migrants' personal experiences — from labour opportunities to exposure to abuse and coercion, including sexual slavery, early or forced marriage and commercial sex trafficking — should receive a high priority.
38. The international demand for care workers, which has driven a growing number of women to migrate in recent years, should be investigated through a dedicated research programme.
39. Long-distance parenthood and changes in family roles and relations as a result of migration without family reunification should be the object of systematic, comparative research.
40. The specific problems of migrant youth and second-generation children and adolescents, who grow up between two distinct cultures and sets of social norms, and the quality of their experiences should be investigated to inform policies to promote equal opportunities and social cohesion.
41. The temporary labour migration of contract workers who do not have full rights in the host society, and who often have limited access to legal assistance, should be monitored and evaluated.
42. Researchers should prioritize the assessment of linkages between international migration, mortality and morbidity, as such linkages are critical for a comprehensive understanding of global health issues.
43. Restricted or limited pathways for legal migration have fostered transnational criminal activities — smuggling, trafficking, exploitation and abuse of migrants — raising serious concerns about human rights. Population scientists should critically examine the role of gender, age, education and health as factors that may influence migrants' exposure and vulnerability to abusive practices.
44. Numbers of internally displaced people, asylum seekers and refugees as a direct result of wars, civil conflicts and poor governance have grown rapidly in the last two decades.

- Examining the causes of forced migration, and its consequences for both migrants and their hosts, with an emphasis on problem-solving, should be a research priority.
45. The risks encountered by migrants during their journeys, including detention, abuse, disappearance and death while travelling by land or sea, as well as other dangers faced by migrants during their move, should be systematically identified and measured.
  46. Environmental changes are expected to have a growing impact on future migration and mobility. Researchers should seek to anticipate how global warming and related changes in sea level, land subsidence, violent storms, droughts, floods, salt water intrusions, ocean acidity, atmospheric chemical composition, soil leaching, etc., might affect people's propensity to migrate both internally and internationally.
  47. Evidence should be gathered on the impact of migration policies on actual numbers, characteristics and personal strategies of migrants.
  48. Population scientists should prioritize the effective communication of research results to a wide array of stakeholders, including fellow scientists, media partners, policy makers and the general public, working at the international, national and local levels.

#### **Recommendations for strengthening training programs on migration**

49. Population scientists should re-commit to, and funding should be made available for, the training of current and future generations of social scientists, especially in developing countries. Such training should focus on the analysis of human migration as a component of global development and demographic change.
50. Curricula in demography should be evaluated critically with regard to their inclusion of theories and methods relevant to the study of human migration and its interactions with development.
51. Training programmes in the population sciences should ensure that students are well equipped to contribute concepts, methods, knowledge and evidence concerning the causes and consequences of international migration.