

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, with financial support from the International Organization for Migration, organized a Coordination Meeting on International Migration on 11 and 12 July 2002 in New York. The objectives of the meeting were to discuss issues related to the collection and exchange of information on international migration, and to facilitate coordination of activities within the United Nations system and among other relevant organizations concerned with international migration issues. The meeting, which brought together participants from international, inter-governmental and other relevant organizations, helped build a more solid basis for the collection and exchange of information on international migration.

The meeting comprised four substantive sessions: Measurement and Policy Issues; Major Challenges in Gathering Information on International Migration; Unmet Needs for Information and Coordination of Future Activities and Conclusions. The first session started with the presentation of two background papers prepared by the Population Division, one touching upon measurement issues and a second one on policy issues. The discussion focused on two main topics: (a) Governments' capacities and willingness to produce and share information; and (b) coordination among those working on international migration at the international and national levels. In the second session, participants briefly described their activities in the field of international migration and the lessons learned from them. Such activities are also described, in further detail, in the papers submitted before the Meeting. Participants agreed on the importance of building national capacity at various levels, technical and managerial, and in several sectors, taking into account regional and national particularities. While there was awareness of the need to improve coordination and cooperation among relevant organizations, the extent to which efforts were coordinated was unclear. The extent of unmet needs, at both the national and international levels, was debated in the third session. The need of data to address emerging issues, such as short-term migration and the movement of persons in the context of trade in services, was also discussed. The group saw the need for further inter-agency meetings focused on emerging policy needs.

At the end of the Meeting, participants reached a series of conclusions regarding capacity-building needs, methodology, research priorities and coordination. It was agreed that international organizations should encourage and facilitate the collection, analysis and dissemination of international migration statistics and policies by Governments. Multilateral efforts to standardize international migration statistics and information should be strengthened in order to improve cross-national comparability; in addition, existing sources of information on international migration should be fully exploited. Regarding the research agenda, relevant organizations were encouraged to take into account the evolving nature of international migration issues and policies. Among research issues highlighted were family reunification, trafficking, remittances, flows of skilled migrants, temporary movements, the relationship between population and sustainable development, and the consequences of international migration policies for both sending and receiving countries. It was agreed that coordination among organizations that gather and analyze international migration should be strengthened, and that efforts should also be made to assist relevant institutions within countries to coordinate their reporting on international migration.