

COORDINATION MEETING ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

Population Division

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations Secretariat

New York, 11-12 July 2002

**IOM STATISTICS ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION:
AN OVERVIEW ***

International Organization for Migration **

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** IOM, Geneva, Switzerland. The views expressed in the paper do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations Secretariat.



IOM Statistics on International Migration: An Overview

I. Statistics at IOM

Established in 1951 as an intergovernmental organization to resettle European displaced persons, refugees and migrants, IOM has now grown to encompass a variety of migration management activities throughout the world.

IOM routinely collects statistics relating to its operational programmes and projects in over 100 countries. These programmes and projects are divided into seven main service areas:

- Assisted Voluntary Returns
- Counter-trafficking
- Labour Migration
- Mass Information
- Migration Health
- Movements
- Technical Co-operation on Migration

IOM's operational statistics cover a range of different migratory movements including the repatriation and resettlement of refugees, the return of highly qualified persons, victims of trafficking, stranded transit migrants, internally displaced persons, unsuccessful asylum seekers, and soldiers involved in de-mobilisation programmes.

In 2001, IOM facilitated the movement of 450,738 persons. All quantitative information regarding the movement of persons assisted by IOM is stored in a database called *Mosaic*. The current database contains statistics for IOM movements dating back to January 1992. The database includes information on migrants' and refugees' nationality, sex, age, family composition, health, and the origin/destination of each movement. For some countries additional data are available such as reasons for return, the means of transport used, and the time spent in the host country. There are also separate information databases on migrant/refugee health and trafficking. All the information databases will be integrated into one with the introduction of a new database called *MIMOSA* by the end of 2002.

IOM also conducts a number of research studies that provide statistical data on migration trends in different parts of the world, e.g. "The World Migration Report" and "Migration Trends in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia". The latter report is the third in a series of reports on migration trends in this region. IOM has also conducted several studies on behalf of the European Commission and other authorities on the availability and quality of data on irregular migration. The most recent example of such research is a study for the UK government entitled "Irregular migration flows in Europe: data sources, patterns and trends".

II. Examples of IOM statistics

1. Emergency/Post-emergency Movement (Repatriation)

IOM's return database provides a unique set of statistics on global return movements. Since 1995, IOM has provided voluntary return assistance to more than 1 million people returning to over 130 countries since 1995.

One of the major programmes implemented by IOM is to organize and facilitate the repatriation of refugees and other groups, such as IDPs, during and after emergencies. IOM statistics relating to this form of assistance fall under two broad headings: "Repatriation of refugees" and "Post-emergency movement assistance". The first category refers to the voluntary repatriation of refugees organized in accordance with UNHCR's protection concerns and procedures. The second category includes persons who may not be refugees, such as IDPs and soldiers involved in de-mobilisation programmes. During 2000-2001, IOM assisted nearly 300,000 persons under these two headings.

2. Voluntary Assisted Return

IOM statistics distinguish a third major type of return programme called "Return Assistance to Migrants and Governments". IOM's regular ongoing return programmes, such as "Reintegration or Emigration of Asylum Seekers from Germany" (REAG) and "Reintegration or Emigration of Asylum Seekers from Belgium" (REAB) fall under this heading. Persons assisted under these programmes include a high proportion of unsuccessful asylum seekers, but also persons receiving "temporary protection".

In Europe, IOM provides voluntary return assistance to migrants in 18 countries, 9 of which are in the European Union (Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, the UK). IOM probably has the most comprehensive database on voluntary assisted return movements in Europe, and is able to chart return movements to over 100 countries on a monthly basis. 142,434 movements of persons were recorded under the heading "Return Assistance to Migrants and Governments" during 2000-2001.

3. Resettlement

During 2000-2001, more than 200,000 persons were resettled by IOM. The vast majority (70%) of these were resettled to the USA. Other important countries of resettlement during the period were Canada, Australia, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. IOM statistics provide information on the socio-economic profile and the health status of persons being resettled (see separate section below). Regarding Australia and the USA more than 50 per cent of the total caseload in 2000-2001 originated from Europe, particularly South-Eastern Europe.

4. Counter-trafficking

It is widely accepted that it is extremely difficult to obtain reliable data on the scope and magnitude of migrant trafficking. Governments mainly rely on estimates, which can vary widely.

In recent years, IOM has considerably expanded its counter-trafficking programmes and these provide a rare source of international data on trafficking based on information obtained directly from victims of trafficking who have been assisted by IOM.

IOM collects both qualitative and quantitative information on trafficking such as the number of victims assisted, their country of origin, age, travel route, and how they are trafficked. Where available, information is also collected on the nationality and the methods used by the “traffickers”. Data on trafficking are compiled into special databases in some of the IOM field offices, such as those in the Balkan region. Within a year, this information gathering system is to be extended to all the IOM counter-trafficking projects operating in various parts of the world. In 2000-2001, IOM assisted 1,324 victims of trafficking. Although this number represents only a small percentage of the total number of victims of trafficking worldwide, IOM is able to provide detailed information about such persons which, at present, is not available from other sources.

5. Migration Health

The Migration and Health Services (MHS) department of IOM specializes in the medical assessment and treatment of refugees and migrants. In 2001, MHS conducted 75,839 medical assessments of prospective migrants and refugees being considered for resettlement. Though personal medical information is strictly confidential, IOM does produce analyses of the non-personal health-related data that it collects. For example, data are collected on the incidence of Tuberculosis and HIV among migrants and refugees. Thus, active tuberculosis cases were found in 0.15% of the total population examined in 2001 and referred for treatment. The majority of health assessments are conducted in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (40,487), followed by South-East Europe (13,694), South-East Asia (13,097), Africa (8,396) and South Asia (165).

For data collection and management purposes, MHS has created regional databases, each within their own special characteristics. A comprehensive medical database, “MedIOM” is being developed and should be operational by early 2003. The Migration and Health Service Area also produces an annual report which provides a detailed breakdown of health-related statistics collected by IOM.

III. Purpose and use of gathering such information at IOM

IOM’s operational statistics are collected mainly for project development, evaluation and management purposes, for example, to enable the Organization to report on its activities to its Member States and donors. IOM also collects statistics for budget and accounting purposes within the administration. More recently, efforts have been made to improve data collection in order to assist in policy analysis and to achieve a better understanding of regular and irregular migratory flows.

IV. The ways to disseminate the information gathered

The Director General's Report, submitted to the IOM Council every year, presents detailed statistics relating to IOM's programmes and projects.

IOM's statistics are also presented in various international fora and in regular publications, such as "IOM News", the "Quarterly Trafficking in Migrants Bulletin", and the "Migration and Health Newsletter".

This year, IOM's flagship publication the "World Migration Report: 2002" will, for the first time, contain a special section devoted to the presentation and analysis of IOM statistics.

IOM field offices also regularly publish statistics relating to IOM's operations. Some offices prepare annual reports and others quarterly reports.

V. Difficulties encountered in gathering the information

IOM's statistics are based on the coverage of IOM's programmes and projects. Most of the regular ongoing return programmes, for example, are situated in European countries. Most of the counter-trafficking programmes are located in Europe and Asia.

IOM's statistics relate mainly to programmes rather than types of migratory flows. For example, some return programmes include several different categories of returnees, such as temporary protected persons, unsuccessful asylum seekers and trafficked migrants, making it difficult to analyse individual types of return movements. Some programmes include both return and resettlement movements. The regular return and resettlement programmes developed by IOM in Western Europe at the end of the 1970s and the early 1980s were designed to provide both kinds of assistance.

VI. Area where the data collection effort needs to be strengthened

IOM has no special unit responsible for the analysis of migration statistics. Nor is there a survey archive containing the results of the numerous sample surveys of migrants conducted by the Organization over recent years. For example, IOM has conducted many nationally representative surveys of migration potential and surveys to assess the level of awareness among potential victims of trafficking.

IOM field offices are not required to submit regular statistical reports based on migration trends in the countries where they are stationed. However, an increasing number of offices are taking steps to collect data in a systematic way to facilitate project development and to inform policy makers about emerging migratory flows.

IOM data refer primarily to flows rather than stocks of migrants and refugees. Until recently, relatively little information has been collected on the post-arrival experiences of groups, such as returning migrants, and their ability to re-integrate. However, increased efforts are being undertaken to monitor the experiences of migrants returned by IOM, especially those belonging to vulnerable groups, who may require special assistance.