TOWARDS BETTER DATA ON POPULATION AND THE ECONOMY

Improved data can help tackle economic and social issues in Central Asia. Population and housing censuses support democratic processes by providing reliable information. The data are also used to improve public services, e.g. by determining how many people need new roads or schools.

This notion served as a leitmotif at a recent meeting in Paris, where representatives of the member countries of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), which includes Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, met with UNECE, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Eurostat and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT).

Mr. Vladimir Sokolin, Chairman of CIS-STAT

Mr. Vladimir Shevchenko, Deputy Chief of Administration Department of CIS-STAT

SPECA was launched in 1998 to strengthen regional cooperation and promote integration of Central Asia into the world economy. As part of the programme, the SPECA Working Group on Statistics has met annually since 2006. In addition, several training programmes by UNECE and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) have addressed data quality in Central Asian countries. As a result, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are currently conducting censuses while Turkmenistan plans to do it in 2012.

Many SPECA countries have made progress in collecting census data. The measures to assure data quality, train staff and introduce new technologies and new survey questions correspond with the recommendations of the Conference of European Statisticians. Cooperation and exchange of practices also increased the countries' experiences. But the success stories did not diminish the demand for more training on census technology, quality evaluation and dissemination.

One of the highlights of the meeting in Paris was a memorandum of understanding signed by CIS-STAT and UNECE. It marked the commitment of the organizations to cooperation in improving the quality of statistics.

The progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, including issues of poverty and sustainable development, is a topic of several future workshops. To better reflect the gender realities of the region, training on gender data will also continue.

It is important to note that the recent global economic crisis revealed many data gaps and highlighted the need for training on core economic statistics such as the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA). The Russian translation of the 2008 SNA, currently prepared by CIS-STAT and ROSSTAT, will lead to further progress in the region. □

For more information, please visit: http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2010.06.speca.htm.

POLAND CONFIRMS ITS COMMITMENT TO UNFC-2009

The Polish Geological Institute-National Research Institute (PGI-NRI) and the Ministry of Environment confirmed that the data in the 2010 edition of its publication "Mineral Resources of Poland" will be prepared according to the United Nations Framework Classification for Fossil Energy and Mineral Reserves and Resources Terminology 2009 (UNFC-2009). Professor Marek Graniczny, Deputy Director of PGI-NRI stated on 22 June "this is the first time a publication will be issued in Poland according to UNFC-2009 and demonstrates the confidence of our Ministry of the Environment and the Polish Geological Institute-National Research Institute in this global classification system and its ability to facilitate international communication and understanding in the area of energy reserves and resources." The publication is an important source of information for people interested in the development of mining and processing industries or in using domestic mineral raw materials in their investments in Poland.

The Workshop "UNFC-2009 – Theory and Practice", organized in Warsaw, 21-22 June, by UNECE, PGI-NRI and the Polish Ministry of the Environment (Department of Geology and Geological Concessions), served to build increased capacity on UNFC-2009 in Poland. The practical application of UNFC-2009 to selected deposits in the Polish mining sector was discussed in detail, as were the significant efforts of Poland to harmonize its terminology with that of the UNFC. Michael Lynch-Bell, Chairman of the UNECE Expert Group on Resource Classification and Partner, Global Oil and Gas and Mining & Metals

Transaction Advisory Services, Ernst & Young, confirmed: "The adaptation of Polish terminology to the UNFC has been carried out over many years and this workshop offered an occasion to present the results of this important work. The event was also a useful opportunity to reinforce the benefits of applying UNFC-2009, which has been designed as a flexible all-encompassing framework, enabling the incorporation and unification of existing national systems, while allowing their classification units and glossary to be retained." □

All presentations delivered at the event are posted on the ECE website at:
http://unece.org/energy/se/docs/spf_pol_june2010.html
For further information, contact Charlotte Griffiths at: reserves.energy@unece.org.

THE AARHUS CONVENTION'S COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE RECEIVES 50TH COMMUNICATION

The Compliance Committee of the UNECE Aarhus Convention received its 50th communication shortly before its 28th meeting, which took place in Geneva from 15 to 18 June 2010.

The compliance procedure is designed to improve compliance with the Convention and is not a redress procedure for violations of individual rights (article 15 of the Convention and decision I/7 of the Meeting of the Parties at their first session in Lucca, Italy, on 21-23 October 2002, as amended by decision II/5).

The Aarhus Convention's Compliance Committee was established by the Parties to the Convention at their first meeting (Lucca, Italy, 21-23 October 2002) and held its first meeting on 17-18 March 2003. In its seven years of existence, the Committee has reviewed 51 cases concerning alleged non-compliance by a Party to the Convention

Out of these 51 cases, 50 were communications originated by members of the public (individuals, NGOs, other stakeholders) and one was submitted by a Party (but merged with a communication from an NGO). Deliberations on some 12 communications are still pending.

The members of the Committee serve in a personal capacity and do not represent the countries of which they are nationals. Currently, the members of the Committee are: Veit Koester (Denmark) (Chair), Svitlana Kravchenko (Ukraine) (Vice-chair), Jerzy Jendroska (Poland), Jonas Ebbesson (Sweden), Merab Barbakadze (Georgia), Alexander Kodjabashev (Bulgaria), Vadim Nee (Kazakhstan), Gerhard Loibl (Austria), and Ellen Hey (Netherlands). □

For more information, please visit:
http://www.unece.org/env/pp/ccMeetings.htm
or contact Aphrodite Smagadi at:
public.participation@unece.org.

FACTS AND FIGURES

MEASURING MIGRANT GROUPS IS NO EASY TASK

International migration affects most world regions and countries and migrants' issues continue to draw the attention of policymakers, analysts, and the media worldwide. However the data on migration are not always available or fully reliable across the countries. The irregular nature of particular migrant groups (for example trafficked persons and unaccompanied minors) is often an obstacle for recording movements and migrant stock internationally and within any one country.
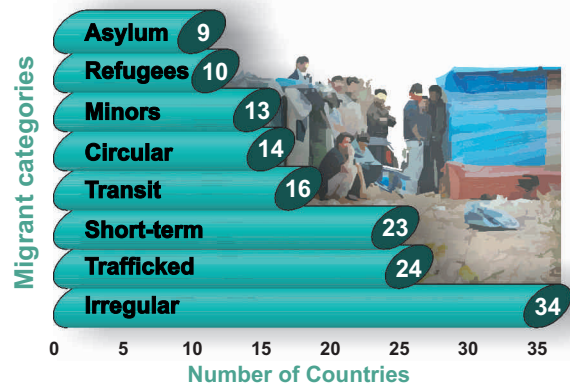
In an attempt to better understand the reasons for the lack of comparable data - a frequent subject of discussion among different actors - UNECE has collected information on practices and methodologies used by 51 countries to define and estimate "difficult to measure" international migrant groups. The questionnaire referred to eight "difficult to measure" categories: irregular migrants, trafficked migrants, short-term migrants, transit migrants, circular migrants, minors, refugees and asylum seekers.

Number of countries reporting on challenges in providing statistical counts/estimates on "difficult-to-measure" international migrant groups
(51 countries filled and returned the questionnaire)

Migrant category	Number of Countries
Asylum	9
Refugees	10
Minors	13
Circular	14
Transit	16
Short-term	23
Trafficked	24
Irregular	34

Source: UNECE questionnaire, 2008.

Thirty-three out of 51 surveyed countries stated that all these categories of migrants are relevant in their country-context. Others pointed to the relevance of two and more selected categories. Notwithstanding the relevance of such migrant groups, many countries reported having difficulties in providing statistical count on them. Collecting data on irregular migrants was marked as challenging by 34 out of 51 countries; on trafficked persons and short-term migrants by 24 and 23 countries, respectively. Refugees and asylum applicants are the most commonly surveyed among the "difficult to measure" groups.

Overall, the responding countries use various sources when collecting and analysing data, including information from censuses, population registers, and other administrative sources. However, it should be noted that due to inconsistencies in data derived from heterogeneous sources, the comparability of statistics collected by various agencies represents an issue. □

For more information, please visit: http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2010.06.speca.htm.