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**Economic Commission for Europe**

## Conference of European Statisticians

**Sixtieth plenary session**

Paris, 6-8 June 2012

Item 10 of the provisional agenda

**Progress reports and work of the Conference of European Statisticians Teams of Specialists****Report of the Joint UNECE/UNFPA  
Regional Workshop on Statistics of International Migration****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

The Conference of European Statisticians, at its fifty-ninth plenary session in June 2011, approved the activities undertaken under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme 2011, and endorsed the list of meetings planned to be organized from June 2011 to June 2012, as provided in document ECE/CES/2011/11/Add.2 and in the Programme of work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, subprogramme on Statistics for 2011 as provided in document ECE/EX/2011/L.2. This list included a Regional Workshop on Statistics of International Migration, which was held in Antalya, Turkey, on 26-27 October 2011.

The present document is the report of that workshop, and is provided to inform the Conference of European Statisticians of the organization and outcomes of that workshop.

## I. Organization and attendance

1. The regional workshop on migration statistics for countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia was organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in collaboration with the United Nations Population Division (UN/DESA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).
2. The workshop was carried out in the framework of the United Nations Development Account project “Strengthening national capacities to deal with international migration: maximizing development benefits and minimizing negative impacts”<sup>1</sup>.
3. The workshop was the third event organized within the framework of the above-mentioned project. It was based on the results and developed some ideas and proposals formulated at the two previous regional workshops that took place in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on 13-15 February 2010 and in Istanbul, Turkey, on 6-8 December 2010.
4. The participants in the workshop included representatives of national statistical institutes, migration authorities, ministries of labour and other relevant ministries of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Participants from international organizations represented the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-Stat), Offices of the IOM in Vienna and Ankara, UN DESA Population Division, UNECE, UNFPA and the World Bank. Academic researchers from Turkey and the Russian Federation were also among the participants. In total, 34 persons took part in the workshop.
5. Mr. Paolo Valente (UNECE) was the Chairperson of the workshop.
6. The workshop was organized in five substantive sessions, besides an opening and a closing wrap-up session. The topics of the sessions were the following:
7. Session I - Migration Data and Policy Needs  
Session II - Harmonizing Data Collection  
Session III - Methods and Approaches of Data Collection  
Session IV - UNECE Clearinghouse on Migration Statistics  
Session V - Data Collection Initiatives by International Organizations
8. Twenty-one presentations were made at the workshop, followed by discussion. The summary of the presentations and the discussion is presented in section III below.

## II. Objective

9. The basic goals of the workshop were linked to consolidating and developing some of the results reached during the two previous workshops in Bishkek and Istanbul.
10. A major topic of the discussion was the establishment of the *UNECE Clearinghouse on statistics of international migration* for countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. This UNECE initiative implies regular collection and storage of data as well as provision of

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/devaccount/projects/2008/0809A.html>

user-friendly and multilingual (English and Russian) free online access to the data for all users. UNECE presented its preparations for the Clearinghouse. The subsequent discussion included technical aspects about the data collection, processing and dissemination through the user interface developed by the UNECE. The comments formulated by the participants at the workshop were noted for consideration in the continuation of the activity towards the finalization of the Clearinghouse and its public launch, expected between the end of 2011 and early 2012.

11. Another objective of the workshop was to discuss the use of the *UNECE Practical Guide on Statistics of International Migration for practitioners of Eastern Europe and Central Asia*<sup>2</sup>. The decision to prepare this guide was taken at the first workshop in Bishkek. In the second workshop in Istanbul, the participants had the opportunity to discuss the draft of the *Practical Guide*. Its final version was presented at this workshop in Antalya.

12. An important objective of the workshop was to provide an opportunity to countries to exchange experiences. A considerable part of the agenda was devoted to presentations from the participating countries about recent developments in the production of statistics. The topics covered included the censuses of the 2010 round, newly available administrative sources of data and modernization of existing systems of data collection, processing and dissemination.

13. Furthermore, the workshop provided an opportunity to facilitate the dialogue between data producers and users, including in particular policymakers.

### III. Summary

14. In the opening session, Mr. Paolo Valente (UNECE) and Ms. Gulnara Kadyrkulova (UNFPA) provided information on the background and main objectives of the workshop. Then Ms. Olga Chudinovskikh (UNECE consultant) presented the final version of the *Practical Guide on Statistics of International Migration for practitioners of Eastern Europe and Central Asia*.

#### A. Session 1: Migration Data and Policy Needs

15. Mr. Pablo Lattes (UN DESA Population Division, New York) in his presentation "The global migration debate: What data do we need to close the evidence-gap?" reviewed the history and role of international institutions (commissions and experts groups) in the sphere of international migration and development. He discussed about the importance of statistics for evidence-based analysis, and presented some issues related to data comparability in the international context. Some aspects of the relationship between migration and development from the perspective of availability of data needed for analysis were also presented in the report.

16. Ms. Marina Manke, IOM Vienna - OSCE/IOM Project - Outcome of the Harmonised Data Collection as a Sound Basis for Policy-Making Project. Ms. Manke presented the main outcomes of this project that has been conducted in selected countries of Central Asia and introduced at the workshop in Istanbul (December 2010). In three

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<sup>2</sup> Full English version: [http://www.scribd.com/fullscreen/73556489?access\\_key=key-15eq68slpwq7svvvsxj2](http://www.scribd.com/fullscreen/73556489?access_key=key-15eq68slpwq7svvvsxj2)  
 Full Russian version: [http://www.scribd.com/fullscreen/73556996?access\\_key=key-1vcoppghztkmitrbn124](http://www.scribd.com/fullscreen/73556996?access_key=key-1vcoppghztkmitrbn124)  
 Both Russian and English versions on the UNECE webpage:  
[http://www.uncece.org/international\\_migration\\_statistics\\_guide.html](http://www.uncece.org/international_migration_statistics_guide.html)

missions (undertaken by Ms. Manke, Ms. Sotes-Linares Rivas and Ms. Chudinovskikh) IOM country offices organized meetings with policy makers and representatives of governmental agencies responsible for migration management or data collection. Based on interviews and analysis of available documentation as well as available data, the experts made an inventory of existing data sources and forms of statistical reports on migration. The main obstacles preventing countries from efficient analysis of migration - and thus efficient policy-making - were identified and discussed. Separate country reports were prepared with recommendations on necessary data that could be collected without substantial or supplementary investments, taking into account budgetary considerations.

17. Ms. Valentina Ungureanu, Migration Department, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection – Migration Profiles: Implementation by the Republic of Moldova, and Ms. Marina Manke, IOM Vienna – (Extended) Migration Profiles Global Approach (joint presentation). The speakers introduced the IOM activities related to the preparation of publications known as “Migration Profiles”. The publications give specific description of migration trends in many countries of the world as well as institutional organization of migration management, policies and statistics. Ms. Manke noted that the first publications were very descriptive. This approach needed a revision and nowadays the IOM tries to develop the analytical side of the reports. It is planned that forthcoming publications will try to highlight the relationships with other events and processes (for example, labour market, health etc.). These considerations lead to the necessity to produce new types of data directly or indirectly connected to migration.

18. Ms. Banu Akadlı Ergöçmen, Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies, Turkey – Review of Migration Policy Responses in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The presentation focused on international, regional and national approaches to migration management with an emphasis on forced migration in countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), their evolution in time since the 1980s and until the first decade of the 21st century.

## **B. Session 2: Harmonizing Data Collection**

19. Mr. Mairambek Beshimov, Department for Regulation of Migration Processes, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic – *Regulation on Data Collection and Exchange in Kyrgyzstan*. The speaker noted that in Kyrgyzstan, presently there is no joint system of migration data collection, processing and sharing. Such a situation could be explained with imperfection in legislation. Mr. Beshimov also mentioned that initiatives of international organizations could really be helpful in terms of streamlining data sources, and improving the procedures of data collection on migration.

20. Ms. Olga Chudinovskikh, UNECE Consultant - *Current Situation in the Russian Federation*. The speaker noted both positive and negative trends in migration data collection in the Russian Federation. The good trends are connected with increase in availability and diversity of administrative data sources. However, at the same time the National Statistical Office (Rosstat) loses its positions because it cannot quickly adjust available systems of data processing to rapidly changing rules of data collection. She provided some examples to demonstrate the main problems about the quality of data and formulated some recommendations how to improve the situation.

21. Mr. Kirill Levshin (Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation, FMS) *Information system of FMS and its operation by means of an interactive map of the regions of Russia*. The speaker reported on the new software that helps to operate Federal Migration Service’s databases. Newly developed interactive map used by the Federal Migration Service makes it possible to query and quickly download statistical reports with complete information on migration situation in every region of the Russian Federation. It is also

possible to obtain statistical reports with a very detailed level of disaggregation (by all categories of migrants and their characteristics). The software also allows obtaining statistical reports with aggregated information by all available or necessary variables. The information system is currently available only for internal use of the FMS. The participants noted that it would be good if a modified version of the system, with limited data to preserve data confidentiality, would be made available online.

22. Ms. Natalia Kiseleva, Department of Statistics Population and Health, State Statistics Service (Rosstat) – *Trends in statistical records and development of migration statistics in the Russian Federation*. The report provided detailed information on flows of information between the main agencies responsible for official statistics of migration (the Federal Migration Service and the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation) and on existing procedures between regional and central agencies of Rosstat. Taking into account peculiarities of the Russian legislation on registration of population and for the purposes of better count of migration flows, Rosstat has changed the definition of migrants (using a new time criterion of duration of stay of 9 months and longer). It implies reorganization of the whole procedure of data processing, including collection and storage of records and production of statistics on international migration.

23. Ms. Natalia Chubinidze, Civil Registry Agency of Georgia - *Reforming System of registration and service delivery, new changes on migration management*. The speaker provided detailed information on the reforms in institutional organization of migration management in Georgia, including the establishment of the Commission on Migration, its goals and interaction with other governmental agencies. Ms. Chubinidze described basic responsibilities of different agencies thus identifying types of events and facts that could be linked to statistical recording. Special attention was paid to the new system of population registration in Georgia that has a special importance for the country as regular data collection on migration flows (both international and internal) did not exist in Georgia since the beginning of the 1990s.

### **C. Session 3: Methods and Approaches of Data Collection**

24. Mr. Elkhan Valiyev, State Migration Service of Republic of Azerbaijan – *Unified System of Migrant Recording*. The speaker provided information about the history of the State Migration Service of Azerbaijan, its functions, focusing on the Joint Information System in the sphere of migration that was established on 6 February 2006 in accordance with a decree of the president of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Until now, “The Regulations on the Joint Information System” have been adopted and Migration Service has undertaken some steps to make available the necessary sources of information and to organize efficient management of the system. It is planned that the system will become the main source of statistics on international migration in the country.

25. Ms. Dina Pimakhova, Department on Passport and Citizenship, State Migration Services of Ukraine – *Administrative Data Sources of State Migration Service*. The presentation covered basic information on institutional reforms in migration management in Ukraine and establishment of Migration Service (in January 2010). This change meant a transition from decentralized to centralized form of migration regulation, which could be definitely considered as a positive change. The new Migration Service merged functions that were previously dispersed between seven other agencies. The presentation covered the functions, the organizational structure and the categories of migrants that will be subject to statistical recording. Centralising the databases under one authority could be a big advantage for the production of statistics.

26. Gulnara Djalobaeva, Labour and Employment Statistics Department, National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic – *Comparative analysis of the results of the existing surveys on Labour Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic*. Ms. Jailobaeva provided detailed information on the questionnaires that were used in current household budget surveys; it was emphasized that within the most recent years the survey tries to collect information about returned migrant-workers. The questionnaire makes it possible to understand better such issues as duration of absence (stay), direction of migration and social aspects of labour migration, and reason for return.

27. Mr. Aleksei Yarkovets, Department of Demographic Statistics, National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus (Belstat) – *Development of Migration Module in the 2010 Round of Population Census*. In 2010, the participants of the Bishkek workshop were informed about the plans of national statistical agency of Belarus referring to the processing and publication of the results of the recent 2009 population census. This year, Mr. Yarkovets presented main results of this work. Belstat has published 19 tables with migration related data that have been already published and available on the website of the statistical agency. A considerable offer of microdata products will also be available soon for authorized users.

#### **D. Session 4: UNECE Clearinghouse on Migration Statistics**

28. Mr. Paolo Valente, UNECE Statistical Division - *Presentation of the Clearinghouse Project and Demonstration of the Database*. Mr. Valente provided information on the background of the creation of a new database on migration statistics on the UNECE platform, including some previous UNECE initiatives on collection of statistics from the CIS countries and comparative analysis of data. One of these initiative lead to the preparation of guidelines on using data on immigration collected in a receiving country to improve statistics of emigration in the country of origin. The participants were informed about the process and work conducted to establish the Clearinghouse. Its interface and the procedures to extract and downloading statistical reports were demonstrated online.

29. Ms. Ayima Okeeva, UNECE Statistical Division - *Summary of the Results of the Data Collection Exercise*. The report presented in detail the results of the recent UNECE activity focused on collection of data from countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia Ms. Okeeva described the main issues of data availability and formatting, and presented the plans for the finalization of the Clearinghouse.

30. Ms. Olga Chudinovskikh, UNECE Consultant - *Thematic Report as First Overview of Data Comparability. A Viewpoint of a User*. The presentation was devoted to the main aspects of data comparability (definitions, time series, etc.). The speaker listed the main advantages and limitations in terms of comparability of statistics obtained from international databases and different sources, and provided some patterns based on comparative analysis of such data.

#### **E. Session 5: Data Collection Initiatives by International Organizations**

31. Mr. Pablo Lattes, Population Division/UN DESA - *Migration data collection in the Region*. Mr. Lattes reminded about the main definitions used in statistics of migration that have been a subject of interest of the UN Population Division, including definitions of migrants stocks and flows. Relying on the experience of the UN Population and Statistics Divisions, the speaker summarized the overall picture of data availability by countries of the EECA region and made some conclusions about the main gaps. Mr. Lattes also presented some examples of processing and analysis of the available data, including

comparison of ‘mirror’ statistics on the same flows of international migration measured in the countries of destination and origin. Finally, Mr. Lattes reminded the participants about the publication “Migrants count five steps toward better migration data” produced by the Center for Global Development.

32. Ms. Natalia Kulikovskaya, Department of Social Sphere and Trade Statistics of Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS (CIS-Stat) – *CIS-Stat Approach to Data Collection*. Ms. Kulikovskaya reported that CISS-Stat was very interested in the improvement of migration data quality and comparability. This might be possible only through better-harmonized definitions that are used in statistics of migration and coordination of national legislation in the field of labour migration and employment. It was mentioned that the effectiveness of the efforts focused on improvement of migration statistics could be higher if not only statisticians and researchers but also migration authorities, ministries of interior and other governmental agencies would assign high priority to these objectives.

33. Mr. Erwin Tiongson, World Bank – *Improving Migration and Remittance Statistics in ECA and CIS region under MIRPAL and the broader Migration program of the World Bank*. The speaker provided information on the recent World Bank project “MIRPAL” (Migration and Remittances Peer Assisted Learning) which is a network of practitioners in the sphere of labour migration and remittances. Among its main goals are the improvement of quality of statistics of labour migration and facilitation of data sharing. Special attention was paid to the possible simultaneous survey of migrant workers and their households left behind – respectively in the countries of destination and origin. The survey could be organized in cooperation with CIS-Stat.

34. Ms. Yelda Devlet, IOM Ankara - *Information Basis, Methodology of Data Collection and Development for the Research on Youth Migration*. Ms. Devlet reported on the investigation of migration and employment of youth in the region of Antalya. In particular, she provided a detailed description of the survey methodology, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches: 50 in-depth interviews and questionnaire-based sample survey of about 1500 thousand respondents. Ms. Devlet presented the main characteristics of the sample and showed some statistical results of the survey.

## **F. Group exercise**

35. On the last day of the workshop, the participants conducted a group exercise. For national experts, the task was to explore available on-line resources and to find statistical information needed for description of migration situation in a selected country. The short presentations prepared by the groups demonstrated that in general the group members correctly identified the list of necessary data to provide an overall description of migration process in selected countries. However, the groups came across some difficulties in finding certain data required by the exercise. The results of this exercise suggested that there is a specific need to promote information on data availability and that international organizations must undertake activities in this area. International databases could be very helpful, provided that the users can easily find on the internet information about these resources and their content.

36. The representatives of international organizations discussed the future activities and cooperation in the field of capacity building and development of statistics of international migration in the EECA region. It was noted that during the recent few years statistics of international migration in the EECA region appeared to be in focus of several similar projects undertaken by different international organizations. Some of them also plan to establish databases in international migration statistics on their websites. It was agreed that regular exchange of information on planned activities are necessary to avoid possible

overlaps. This could be done on the occasion of regional meetings of the representatives of these international organizations, national statistical offices and migration authorities. Such cooperation may facilitate and increase efficiency of technical cooperation programmes promoted by international organizations and reduce the burden placed on the national statistical offices.

37. Participants recognized the need to continue activities aimed at improving the utilization of administrative data taking into account the growing diversity of sources in the countries of the region. They admitted that national interests in managing migration and collecting data vary because of the complexity of migration processes in the region. Some countries are mainly sending migrants and others mainly receiving, whereas only few combine both functions. Since most countries in the region have conducted the census of the 2010 round, it could be useful to analyse these data on migration to understand better the developments during the intercensal period.

#### **IV. Conclusions**

38. In the closing session, the organizers recalled that the activities in the UNECE region of the Development Account project on migration have concluded. Representatives of countries and international organizations shared the opinion that it is necessary to identify financial resources and institutional mechanisms to continue the good work conducted in the EECA region in the framework of that project. Such work should further support the development of national and international systems of migration data collection, improve data quality, promote regular data exchange and facilitate access to data for a broad range of users.

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