

High-level Seminar on Population Censuses and Migration Statistics in CIS Countries

Population and migration statistics: situation in the CIS region

Valdimir Sokolin, CIS STAT

1. The total population of the CIS countries (currently 11 countries) was estimated at about 282 mln people at the beginning of 2013, or 4 % of the world population. In 1992 the CIS population amounted to 277 mln people.

2. After having become independent, the CIS countries have already implemented two rounds of censuses. A legal framework for the census was developed; special laws on the census, or laws on statistics were adopted.

3. In 2006, the Council of CIS Heads of State, in furtherance of the United Nations Resolution, adopted a special decision on conducting a census in the CIS member states in the closest time to the 2010 period and on a common methodological basis. This was due to the need to adequately reflect the demographic and migration processes in the CIS region.

4. The Coordinating Board on population censuses was established, comprising representatives of the CIS national statistical offices. A model questionnaire was prepared as well as the main provisions for census, methodological guidelines for the study of migration in the CIS countries during censuses, agreed standard models of statistical tables for interstate data exchange and publication of the 2010 round census results.

5. So far, the census was conducted in eight countries of the CIS in 2009 - Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, in 2010 in Russia, Tajikistan, in 2011 in Armenia, in 2012 in Turkmenistan. About 70% of the population was enumerated. A general census in the 2010 round was not conducted in Moldova, Ukraine and Uzbekistan¹. The time lag between national censuses could reach six years (provided that Ukraine and Moldova conduct their censuses before the end of the round). This lag could not allow for a correct analysis of the demographic situation, and what is very important – of current migration processes in the CIS region.

6. Migration increasingly affects not only demographic processes, but also economic development of the countries. For the majority of the CIS population the migration area remains the same. The share of external migration movements between the CIS states is estimated at almost 85%.

7. One of the most important decisions made by the CIS Heads – creation of a common labor market in the CIS - requires reliable information systems. However, when comparing national data and generating information, aimed at characterizing the migration situation in the whole Commonwealth, a problem of statistics reliability arises. Mirror comparisons of national data on migration flows show significant discrepancies, observed for a sufficiently long period of time. The current reporting on labor migration complicates analysis of the situation due to a number of methodological differences in accounting of this category of workers.

8. The basis of incomparability of migration flows data are mainly differences in the basic legal definitions and approaches to the accounting of migration, which is conducted in each state in strict accordance with national legislation. There are differences in primary accounting documents,

¹ Uzbekistan conducted no census in the 2000 round and is not reportedly planning to conduct it in the 2010 round.

confirming the status of a migrant; procedures of registration at the place of destination; definitions and criteria used in the national statistical practice. The variety in the basic legal definitions and approaches to the accounting of migration makes it difficult to collect comparable statistics.

9. Work to improve migration data should be carried out in close cooperation of national statistical offices with migration services, ministries of interior, labor authorities and other bodies responsible for management of migration processes. It is necessary to form a unified approach of the CIS countries to the definition and classification of migrants as well as to develop methodology for calculating migration, taking into account the need of cross-country comparisons.
