UNITED NATIONS EXPERT GROUP MEETING O
BASE FOR THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGR
Population Division
Department of Economic and Social Affai
United Nations Secretariat
New York
5-6 October 2015

DRAFT NOTES FOR UNITED NATIONS POPUL
                                    YORK, O

Richa

incomes of farm populations, reducing incentives to leave. Similarly, policies to restore degraded rural environments (targets 15.1-15.5) should reduce migration from rural areas, where the populations depend on natural resources (not only farming). There exist a few studies (for example, Massey and others, 2010 on Nepal) showing areas with more deforestation and higher time/money costs of acquiring fuelwood have more out-migration. On the other hand, to the extent to which the world develops policies to reduce fishing to control marine pollution, nutrient pollution, overfishing and illegal exploitation of fresh and salt water species, this would for a time further reduce the economic viability of fishing and lead to out-migration from coastal areas, as is needed anyway with global warming (indicators 13.1-3, 13.b, 14.1-14.6; as well as in terrestrial ecosystems (15.1-15.5).

In addition, policies to price resources at their real values including environmental degradation and depletion (target 12.c) should lead to more sustainable use of resources and higher incomes for the rural poor who depend on these resources that are being degraded and made less productive.

The topic of forced labour, human trafficking, and child labour, and more generally protecting labour rights as human rights, is mentioned in targets 8.7 "including migrant workers, in particular women", which deals with terrible exploitation and human tragedy. But this is not viewed as a migration issue, and in fact the many times more numerous refugees and asylum seekers do not seem to be mentioned in the SDGs, nor are undocumented migrants who also usually exploited by employers.

Now what are the existing key sources of existing data on migration and challenges to their use for monitoring the achievement of the SDGs?

The short answer is that migration is not taken seriously in the new SDGs anyway, as was the case with the MDGs, so why should we care? First, why has it not been taken seriously? Part of the explanation is due to doubts about the efficacy of policies to alter internal migration within countries short of direct controls, as used to be the case in many planned states through compulsory and enforced

In appraising the usefulness of existing sources of data on migration in a country, several questions need to be addressed:

- x What is the sample size and geographic coverage? Numbers of migrants, households with migrants, and representativeness of the sample of migrants?
- x What is the focus of the survey, and hence the availability already of *other* data useful in the study of migration, such as the main demographic characteristics of migrants and others (age, sex, education, marital status, employment and occupation, etc.)?

- x Are any data collected to identify internal or international migrants? What data are collected on their characteristics?

- x Are any data collected on the situation of migrants at or prior to the time of migration?

- x Are any data collected on the situation of non-migrants at or prior to the time of usual migration?

For most countries in the world, the main data sources on international migration are population censuses, again along with continuous population registers in the minority of countries which have them (few developing countries, so not discussed further below). And most censuses have only data for each person on the place/country and date of birth, that is, the foreign born population. This continues to be the source used by the United Nations Population Division for about two thirds of the countries (see International Migration 2013 Wall Chart or excel files). This provides only lifetime migration, which is of little interest for the SDGs, since it says nothing about recent migration flows in or out of the country.

Other sources of data on both internal and international migration are household surveys. The majority of countries now undertake regular, national labour force (LF) surveys, while about as many developing countries undertake Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), somewhat fewer Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), and dozens of countries Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS). Most of these collect no data on migration beyond the question on place of birth. LSMS surveys, in contrast, do collect some basic data on internal migr, on last change of residence. As far as is bt mee .000765.5(hn stil)

migration: (1) a sample size insufficient to yield enough "rare elements" (for example, migrants in the previous five years) to be useful; and (2) a questionnaire which is not designed to obtain data on migrants (and non-migrants) at the time of migration, that is, retrospective data, in the past. A normal household survey does not obtain this kind of data. Unless the questionnaire is structured to do this, the data collected will not be of much use for studying either the determinants or consequences of migration. And unless the sample size if large (especially for internal migration), or is altered to oversample migrants, and/or the prevalence of migrants of interest is high, the rare elements problem would ensure that there will not be enough migrants for the survey to even provide useful data on the characteristics of migrants, or changes in them.

A further note on LF surveys is desirable. Since these are the most common (in over 100 countries), regular, nationally representative, implemented by government, cover a topic integral to much migration (employment), and usually have the largest sample size of any household survey in the country, they may offer the best option for a vehicle to collect migration data across many countries. Most already have detailed data on employment and unemployment, hours of work, income, fringe benefits, occupation, etc., as well as a household roster listing members of the household including basic demographic characteristics similar to those in a census, including place/country of birth. But that is as far as most go in collecting migration data on foreign-born. So, first, the census-type questions need to be added, at minimum, on place of previous residence (within the country or outside) of all household members (or residence five years ago), when arrived, and reason for migrating. To this should be added census-type questions on emigration, asking if any member of the household left in last x (for example, five) years, and if so, name, sex, age when left, reason and destination (if possible, education and marital status at departure as well, and certainly in a labor force survey, employment situation). Further information on migration intentions and collection of data on non-migrants (as 3 below) would be desirable as well. Migration modules for both mainly sending and mainly receiving countries (15-20 additional questions for each) were developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and incorporated on a pilot basis in national LF surveys in Armenia, Thailand, Egypt and Ecuador around 2004-2008, and led to useful data, although it is not known if any careful or comparative evaluations of the experience took place. While it is not known if this experience has been replicated in any of those countries, it is known that something similar has been done more recently in Ukraine and Moldova (on the latter, see ILO, 2013).

This leads to the question on whether there are specialized surveys on internal or international migration in many countries. Referring only to developing countries, there certainly have been many such surveys over the years, although most are not national surveys since they are rarely financed by countries out of their own resources, and most are done by university or NGO research centers, "off the grid", as it were. On internal migration, developing countries have implemented specialized surveys on migration covering large regions of the country, beginning with the Sierra of Ecuador (1997-98) and Ludhiana district in India (1997)—two surveys covering both g6c,58—t id s1fbTD .0011 Tc .1ue SieTc .1uw [(disted7.1(e)

external research funding, rather than as a part of a national strategy to, for example, collect migration data for policy analysis. There is no coordination and little comparability of methods or analyses, although some provide useful models to learn from.

On international migration, some countries including the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom and many other developed countries, undertake small government-sponsored surveys of immigrants (see Bilsborrow, 2015). A few developing countries have done surveys on emigrants (for example, Mexico, Morocco, Philippines). But the hugeness of remittance flows has awakened international institutions to the potentially enormous role international migration and subsequent remittance flows back

problem, even when there are funds for innovative data collection via surveys. Thus much remains to be learned about migration, especially international migration, from specialized surveys and analyses. There is also a crying need for consistency in definitions and use of "appropriate comparison groups" in analyses of determinants or consequences of migration, which continues to be rare in the field, weakening the value of empirical studies.

Hopefully this will be remedied in the coming years so that migration can find a seat at the table when the third round of development goals for the world is formulated in 2030. In any case, there is no doubt that the evidence base of data on migration needs improving and is going to be considerably improved in the near future.

Citations

Bilsborrow, Richard E. (2015). Concepts, Definitions and Data Collection Approaches. In *Handbook of Migration and Population Distribution.* Michael White and Josh DeWind, eds. Springer.

_____ (2013). *Sampling Plans for MED-HIMS Surveys.* Paris: European Union; Eurostat/MEDSTAT; World Bank, UNFPA, UNHCR; League of Arab States.

Bilsborrow, Richard E., A. S. Oberai, and Guy Standing (1984) *Migration Surveys in Low-Income Countries: Guidelines for Survey and Questionnaire Design.* London, UK, and Dover, NH: Croom Helm.

Bilsborrow, Richard E., and others (1997) *International Migration Statistics: Guidelines for Improving Data Collection Systems.* Geneva: International Labour Office.