



# Measuring the numbers and characteristics of refugees

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***Session 1.A: Improving Data on Refugees: Lessons from  
the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics***

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**Unit F2 – Population and migration**

- 1. Recommendations on core questions for measuring refugees and refugee related populations***
- 2. Data sources for refugee statistics and some recommendations***
- 3. Statistical data sets on refugees and refugee related population***

# Core questions for measuring refugees and refugee related populations – census and surveys

*Currently in UN Census Recommendations:*

- a) Country of birth**
- b) Country of citizenship**
- c) Acquisition of citizenship**
- d) Year or period of arrival in the country**

*In addition IRRS recommends to include as a core census / household surveys topic/question:*

- a) Reason for migration, with response categories:**
  - i. Employment (including military service)
  - ii. Education and training
  - iii. Marriage, family reunification or family formation
  - iv. Forced displacement (refugees, asylum seekers, temporary protected status, others)
  - v. Other

# Data sources for refugee statistics

- *National data sources*
  - **Population and housing census**
  - **Sample surveys of population**
  - **Administrative data including population registers**
- *International data sources*
  - **Registers of UNHCR**
  - **Registers of UNRWA**

# Data sources for refugee statistics

- a) description of the data sources*
- b) references to relevant international recommendations*
- c) data quality considerations*
- d) advantages and limitations of the data source in general, and for estimating refugee related populations in particular*
- e) recommendations for improving future data collection methodologies, drawing on recent experiences and practice*

# Data sources for refugee statistics – some recommendations (1)

## Population and housing census

- Encourage all future censuses to **include all three core migration topics** (country of birth, country of citizenship, and year or period of arrival)
- Include “reason for migration” as an **additional core topic in the international census recommendations**
- Include persons living in **refugee camps, reception centres, temporary structures and collective accommodation** in all census enumerations
- **Exploit other data sources**, such as registers, other administrative sources and sample surveys, **and combine these with census data** to produce more extensive and detailed refugee statistics
- It is advisable that **questions on migration be thoroughly tested to improve their reliability**, including the testing of core migration questions in respect of refugees and refugee related populations
- ....

# Data sources for refugee statistics – some recommendations (2)

## Sample surveys of population

- In order to **enhance the quality of survey data** on refugees, the involvement of NSOs is highly recommended (expertise, networks, staff)
- When carrying out specialized surveys the **sample should include** those living in camps, reception centres and in dwellings outside camps, the **methodology should be specially designed** to deal with the various issues, limitations and national context concerning refugee related populations
- To maximize the quality, utility and comparability of data collected in various countries, it is recommended that a **model questionnaire with a set of core and optional questions and/or modules** is developed, designed and tested
- The core questions topics should be modified to reflect **national priorities** and domains of interest before use. It is possible to adapt the core questioning to include or exclude certain categories of the refugees and refugee like population, depending on national needs
- Where national priorities and conditions allow, **panel surveys** should be considered as the **preferred method** for collecting information about **refugees' integration**
- ....

# Data sources for refugee statistics – some recommendations (3)

## Administrative data including population registers

- **Access to specific administrative databases** related to refugees should be guaranteed for the NSO in compliance with legislation related to privacy and data protection
- **Cooperation and partnership between the NSO and the authorities** in charge of these specific databases should be improved in order to increase the mutual understanding of statistical needs and the potential benefits of better statistics for the authorities concerned
- **Precise registration and deregistration rules** must be established between the statistical and administrative agencies to ensure that the statistical and administrative concepts are fully coordinated
- **A common PIN** for individual refugees and asylum seekers must exist at national level to facilitate the exchange of information and avoid duplicates
- **Persons should be considered as the standard for statistical units** in administrative databases, and family ties should be registered in a way that would make it possible to construct each family as a statistical unit
- ....



# Statistical data sets on refugees and refugee related population

- 1. Joining administrative data and survey data*
  - Integrating data sources as a promising approach
  - Unified data sets leverage the potential of separate sources by enabling the analysis of variables from administrative and from survey data jointly
  - Importance of a common unique identifier (PIN)
- 2. Further data sources to enrich data sets on refugees*
  - Particular attention to: Spatial data and Big data
- 3. Data integration methods and their use for refugee statistics*
  - Record linkage; Matching via unique identifiers; Matching in the absence of unique identifiers; Statistical matching

# Statistical data sets on refugees and refugee related population

## *Recommendations*

- Building up an **integrated data infrastructure** is a desirable but distant goal in most countries
- Meanwhile, **produce case studies** on alternative data integration methods (e.g. collect and share case studies to arrive at best practises)
- **Institution building** (e.g. register of available administrative data sources; cooperation at national level)
- Improve general **acceptance for data integration** projects (e.g. provide legal basis)
- Improve **international environment for data integration** (e.g. develop sound estimation methods)



Thank you for your attention!