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**Statement prepared for the
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International Migration and Development
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The International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP)

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A. IUSSP, INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT: BACKGROUND AND RECENT ACTIVITIES

The International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) is the international professional association for demographers and population scientists. Founded in 1928, the association currently has over 2,000 members in 128 countries, including among its members many renowned academics working on international migration.

Because demographers are involved both in the creation and implementation of surveys on human population and in the analyses of the data they collect, the IUSSP has a strong interest in **data quality and availability**.

The IUSSP promotes the use of scientific data to develop evidence-based policies addressing population and human development issues. The IUSSP does not have a political agenda and as such has a long history of serving as a neutral source of expertise on population issues. Its objective is to advance policy discussions by bringing empirical data and analyses to understand the effects of policy measures on populations. It often collaborates with international organizations, especially United Nations bodies.

Through various activities, the IUSSP works **to advance the understanding of international population trends, their determinants and consequences**, especially in relation to economic and social development and human welfare:

- The IUSSP sets up expert scientific panels to examine questions concerning population issues. The IUSSP has organized several scientific panels on international migration. Some of these panels have made important contributions to the knowledge of international migration systems. These include the Committee on International Migration which produced the 1992 volume on *International Migration Systems: A Global Approach* (Clarendon Press Oxford) and the Committee on North-South Migration which produced the 1998 volume, *Worlds in Motion: understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium* (Clarendon Press Oxford).
- More recently, IUSSP panels have organized seminars on the following international migration issues: Demographic Perspectives on Forced Migration and Refugees (Tehran, Iran, 14-16-May 2012); International Migration in the Middle East and North Africa after the Arab Uprising: A Long Term Perspective (Cairo, Egypt, 22-23 April 2013); Global Perspectives on Marriage and International Migration (Seoul, South Korea, 20-21 October 2011); Youth Migration and Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 8-10 December 2010); Policy Use of Qualitative and Quantitative Indicators of Integration (Paris, France, 25-26 May 2009)...
- Every four years, the IUSSP organizes the **International Population Conference**. The last one was held in 2009 in Marrakech, at the kind invitation of the Moroccan Government. International migration was the topic of 15 sessions that included the international migration of highly skilled workers, international migration of women, measuring migration and integration, migration and co-development, etc. International migration will receive even greater attention at the 2013 Conference in Busan, South Korea, 26-31 August 2013 (more information at: <http://busan2013.iussp.org/>), where there will be 18 regular sessions, 2 poster sessions and several side-meetings focusing on migration, including one on “*Migration Data in Developing Countries: Towards Standardized Surveys?*”.

The IUSSP Council recently received a proposal for a new IUSSP Scientific Panel on

Migration Data which will be considered for 2014-2017. The IUSSP members proposing this panel seek to bring together a group of international experts to define and promote a data collection system to provide comparative data on migration which is at the moment either not available or is insufficient to address current policy concerns. The following sections outline the need for comparative data on migration and the preliminary solutions and recommendations such a panel would explore to meet this need.

B. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT: WHAT WE STILL NEED TO KNOW

Important progress has been made in the recent past to collect and disseminate data on international migration. Along with other institutions, including the World Bank, the UN Population Division has made some of the most important contributions to the topic, such as providing new databases on migration stocks and flows. Specific surveys have also provided important data to study the complex relationships between migration and development. Still, the level of information available on international migration does not match the needs of the policy debate. Moreover, some basic information is not available on subjects that are at the core of policy concerns, as exemplified below.

- Emigrants (i.e. those migrants who leave the country where they lived) are expected to play a major role in the migration-development nexus. On one hand, there is a fear that the brain drain (i.e. outmigration of the highly skilled) could impoverish origin countries. On the other hand, there is the hope that migrants could contribute to the development of their home nations through remittances. Knowing the number and the characteristics of these migrants is thus crucial information for departure countries. But, **most countries have no reliable information on their expatriates**. They don't know exactly how many of their citizens live abroad and they don't know where they are, how educated they are, what profession they practice, etc.
- Return and temporary migration have also become key subjects of policy concern, circulation being viewed as a triple win scenario (for the migrants themselves, and their home and host countries) to manage international migration. However, most host countries have no measure at all of the number and characteristics of the migrants who return, and origin countries usually have no relevant data on return migration either. Except where (rare) specific surveys were carried out to study return migration (or where population registers are available), there are **no data on the trends of return (whether it is increasing or not), on the characteristics of returnees and on how successful they are in re-integrating their origin country**. Administrations may have data on migrants who were "encouraged" (if not forced) to go back, but—in most countries— we don't know the extent and impacts of spontaneous return migration.
- Immigration is a phenomenon that is much better registered than out-migration. Still, despite the existence of clear international recommendations regarding the measure of immigration, we still miss a large part of the picture. First, **the availability of data on the stocks of immigrants is still incomplete**, especially in developing countries despite the magnitude of South-South migration. Out of 207 countries that have carried out a census around 2000, only 107 reported to the UN data related to the foreign-born population. Furthermore, measures of migrants stocks are not completely comparable across the world, since the available information to identify migrants varies from one country to another (some recording the individuals' country

of birth while others record only their citizenship). Second, **data collection on second generation immigrants (i.e. children of foreign-born persons) is still exceptional** in most immigration countries, which makes it difficult to study whether integration and discrimination problems persist over generations.

In this section, the objective was not to review what we already know on international migration. We rather wanted to point to a few examples of basic aspects of migration at the core of policy concerns that paradoxically remain poorly measured, studied and known. Censuses may help to collect part of the missing information. However, they are not sufficient to answer important questions related to migration and development, such as: Is a stay abroad a beneficial experience for migrants who return to their home country and reintegrate the labor market? Are the education and health of left behind children better or worse than those of children of non-migrant parents? While being abroad, do migrants contribute to the development of their home country through investments? Etc.

C. STEPS TO IMPROVE DATA FOR MORE EVIDENCE-BASED POLICIES

The objective of the 2013 High Level Dialogue on International migration and development is to identify *“concrete measures to strengthen coherence and cooperation at all levels, with a view to enhancing the benefits of international migration for migrants and countries alike and its important links to development, while reducing its negative implications”* (UN Resolution A/RES/67/219). The goal of maximizing the benefits of migration cannot be reached without a clear picture of international migration trends. Even though some progress has been made, additional steps are needed to improve data collection and knowledge on international migration:

Improving Baseline Data

- UN recommendations for censuses should be widened to allow the measurement and study of return migration. A question on the country of previous residence should be added to the set of questions to be introduced in census questionnaires.
- Censuses should also provide information on out-migration (i.e. on international migrants linked to the surveyed households). This is critical to provide measures of out-migration but also sampling frames for surveys on international migration in origin countries.
- Recommendations on census content are not sufficient. Funding must be found to ensure that they are implemented in the field and also that the data are made available. To this end, closer coordination between UN bodies and other stakeholders (including funding institutions) is needed. The role of the UN is unique in setting standards, collecting and disseminating data; it may require additional support.

Launching a Program of Surveys on International Migration (SIM)

- Census data can provide basic information on migrants and their characteristics but they are not suited to study the causes and consequences of international migration, and the complex relationships between migration and development. Specific data on international migration are thus needed and should be collected either through standardized modules to be added to existing surveys, or through surveys entirely dedicated to international migration.
- One possibility the proposed IUSSP Panel would investigate is the feasibility of a program of Surveys on International Migration (SIM). Similar surveys already exist

in other socio-demographic domains. For instance, the *Demographic and Health Surveys* (DHS) program collects, analyzes and disseminates representative data on population, health, HIV, and nutrition through more than 300 surveys in over 90 countries. UNICEF has assisted about 180 countries in collecting and analyzing data in order to fill data gaps for monitoring the situation of children and women through the *Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys* (MICS).

- Engaging in a program of surveys requires specific means. Member states should decide to create a dedicated, multi-year funding to enhance the collection of data on international migration. Such a program should be coupled with initiatives aimed at reinforcing expertise and institutional capacities to collect and disseminate migration data.

D. CONCLUSION

As the international professional association of demographers, the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) promotes the collection and analysis of relevant population data that can help deciders formulate adequate policies. Currently, the available information on international migration is inadequate to address all the challenges and questions raised by the growing movement of people all over the world. Efforts are needed to improve current data collection systems, so that policies on international migration are informed by scientific data that is objectively collected and measured.