MANAGING LABOUR MOBILITY IN THE EVOLVING GLOBAL ECONOMY

PART B

ENHANCING THE KNOWLEDGE BASE*

CHAPTER 9

1. Introduction

Migration management is a sensitive public policy domain where every policy proposal is the subject of close scrutiny by political parties, the media, interest groups and the community at large. Migration is increasingly recognized by countries of origin and destination as having the potential to provide appropriate solutions to problems of labour supply and demand, but public opinion is sharply divided over this issue. Some may see migration as the answer to demographic problems, such as low birth rates, population ageing and contracting labour forces. Others view migrants as competing for scarce resources. Policymakers therefore confront various challenges as they seek to develop balanced and effective migration policies. They are conscious of the risks they incur in generating unintended dynamics that can be detrimental to the labour market in particular, and economic growth in general (Boswell et al., 2004).

Governments considering the introduction of labour migration programmes as a means of addressing labour market concerns need to base their decisions on reliable information and migration data.

This chapter discusses the ways in which governments can and do enhance their knowledge base and their capacity to devise timely and effective labour migration policies. As discussed in greater detail in Chapter 11, the governments of destination countries often rely on the available knowledge base in the labour market provided by, for example, employers and trade unions, to formulate, implement and evaluate their labour migration policies. Governments may, however, also develop their own knowledge base by collecting and analysing appropriate data and sponsoring/conducting their own research on migration, including labour migration. This chapter deals primarily with the knowledge base at the disposal of governments and the means to enhance it. Since labour migration is an integral part of international migration, some of the initiatives discussed in this chapter are of relevance to the management of international migration in general, but the main focus is on labour migration. Three areas of activities are emphasized.

The first addresses the nature and quality of existing data collection mechanisms. Official government statistics may suffer from a lack of reliability and

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comparability, in part owing to different definitions used, concepts of measurement and data collecting methods. Governments and international bodies are therefore looking for ways and means to improve the reliability and comparability of their official data.

Second, governments sometimes need to adjust their statistical systems in order to respond to new labour migration challenges for which only limited or no data are available. The chapter discusses different strategies and initiatives to collect data on emerging or rapidly evolving policy issues such as transnational communities or diasporas, circular migration, remittances, highly skilled migration, irregular migration and the impacts or outcomes of various migration programmes.

Lastly, a range of measures exists to improve the availability and policy relevance of data and information on migration. Though many and diverse sources are engaged in the collection and generation of migration data, such sources are not necessarily always known to policymakers, or may not be perceived to be of relevance to their decision-making processes or, indeed, such data as exist may not always reach or be available to them. The chapter discusses different approaches and mechanisms to make data more widely accessible and policy-relevant.

2. Enhancing the Knowledge Base on Labour Migration: A Comprehensive Approach to Data Collection

The collection of pertinent data is fundamental to appropriate and timely policymaking. As in other policy areas, data collection systems in the field of migration, especially concerning labour migration, face the challenge of having to serve and reconcile different, and at times conflicting, information needs at various levels of government.

Thus, to formulate and enact legal and policy frameworks, the legislative and executive branches of governments require reliable aggregate and analytical information from which to draw the necessary insights and understandings concerning the different trends and impacts of migration in various areas of interest to the public domain.

In the middle, there are those officials who run the agency offices that deal directly with migrants, in either service or law enforcement roles; they are largely involved in the effective day-to-day management of services offered and activities performed. At this level, the need is also for aggregated information, but of a somewhat different nature. Generally limited in detail or characteristics, the data consist of summaries – of the number of clients processed at a particular time or similar measures used to measure productivity and outcomes of a particular programme.

Finally, the various categories of staff involved in frequent and individual contact with migrants, such as case workers, require detailed and individual information and access to records of migrants to be in a position to align and conduct their programmes and activities in accordance with the particular characteristics, experiences and needs of individual or groups of individual migrants on a predominantly personal and individual basis (Pember and Djerma, 2005).

Although policymakers, programme managers and case workers have different interests in the data collected, they typically have to rely on the same data collection system. In fact, much of the data used for policy or programme management purposes and/or on which expert reports may be based, are initially generated by the programme staff who often have little stake in, or understanding of, how the aggregate records of their individual transactions are used by agency heads and policymakers. In order to generate accurate and timely data on labour migration for policy purposes, a data collection system needs to recognize the different information

needs at the various levels of government and find ways to balance them.

3. Improving the Reliability of Existing Data Sources

The compilation of statistics on international migration, including labour migration will also depend on how "international migration" is defined. There are no universally agreed definitions. Although there are international recommendations on "international migration statistics", differing national definitions still persist, especially regarding subsets of international migration such as labour migration (UN DESA, 1998). Indeed, varying definitions and the methods used to assess labour migration can lead to very different results. The broadest definition includes all international migrants who are currently in the labour force (both employed and unemployed, regular and irregular) as migrant workers. A more restrictive definition counts as migrant workers only those who entered a country for the explicit purpose of employment.

Compared to data on demographic variables, such as fertility and mortality, international migration data are inherently difficult to obtain. For instance, while birth and death occur only once in an individual's life cycle, migration may occur repeatedly, and it is at times hard to determine with precision when it begins and when it ends. Furthermore, many official sources for migration data are frequently intended to achieve particular administrative objectives rather than to yield reliable measurements of migrant stocks and flows. For that reason, statistics compiled from such sources may often be unsatisfactory in terms of coverage and accuracy.

3.1 Main Data Sources and Their Limitations

To obtain quantitative information about migration, including labour migration, multiple sources are typically used to measure flows and stocks.

(a) Administrative records

Official international migration statistics are often a by-product of administrative processes and record-keeping related to the activities of institutions and agencies dealing with various aspects of migration or migration-related areas, such as, for instance, population management. Each country has its own data collection methods and traditions. This is one of the main reasons why the sources from which official statistics on international migration are compiled tend to differ from country to country.

A number of European countries (e.g. Austria, Estonia, Lithuania, the Netherlands) have comprehensive **population registers** and/or **registers of foreigners**, which are accounts of persons residing lawfully in a country. These registers can be used to measure the total stocks of international migrants in a country, as well as inflows when new migrants are recorded (usually after one year in the case of population registers) and outflows when people de-register and leave the country (Hoffmann, 1995; IOM/OSCE/ILO, 2006, 2007).[1]

Countries that do not have a population register often use **residence and work permits** to measure migration flows. These administrative sources generated from operations designed to regulate international migration are particularly suitable to produce information about specific subsets of international migrants. Records covering the grant of residence and work permits, for example, are popular sources for the measurement of labour migration statistics (IOM/OSCE/ILO, 2006, 2007).

Data on visa issuance are another administrative source that allows greater disaggregation of migration flows into specific subsets of international migrants. Such data are typically collected at the point of issue (usually an embassy or consulate) and allow

[1] A problem with emigration statistics from registries, however, may occur when people leave the country and fail to de-register.

visa holders to be grouped into specific categories according to the purpose of entry (e.g. to study, for family unification or for employment). Such data can be cross-checked against information captured at the point of entry through passenger cards. Visa and border collection data are a popular source of international migration statistics, particularly for island states that have a small number of well-controlled ports of entry and departures, such as the U.K. and the Philippines (Bilsborrow et al., 1997).

An important statistical source of information on labour migration for countries of origin, especially in South and Southeast Asia, are **emigration clearances.** Such information on the number of workers departing each year, disaggregated by destination, gender, age, education and occupation is available from the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand, for instance (Bilsborrow et al., 1997).

(b) Population censuses and other household surveys

Administrative records are not the only source of information on labour migration stocks and flows. Population censuses are a major statistical source for measuring stocks of international migrants. Depending on population coverage and definitions of usual residence, census returns that include "place of birth" or "citizenship" provide a good estimate of international migrant stocks. If the census collects labour force data, these can also be used to identify migrant workers. International migration inflows can also be estimated from previous residence questions, while questions about household members or family members living abroad can capture international migration outflows.

Annual labour force surveys (see Section 3.2(a)(ii), below) provide the richest source of labour force information related to migration. These surveys ask questions on place of birth, citizenship and previous residence, as well as other dimensions of international migration, such as reasons for moving. They are able to measure socio-economic conditions of migrant workers that are not captured elsewhere and allow the use of statistical methods to estimate degree of accuracy.

(c) Limitations of existing sources

The strengths and limitations of various sources vary. Administrative records can be reliable sources of statistics in cases where the administrative system is well organized, the quality of reporting is sound and coverage is reasonably complete (owing to incentives for registration or correct reporting, major penalties for not reporting or registering, or a combination of both incentives and penalties). This is often not the case, especially in countries that lack the appropriate resources to ensure complete coverage. The collection costs for administrative statistics are low, but there may be high processing costs to convert administrative records into useable forms. The concepts, definitions and classifications used in the legislation and or procedures within the administrative system are often different from those required to meet statistical user needs. Furthermore, administrative records may miss certain elements of information, given the greater mobility of workers across borders with the liberalization of travel and cheaper transport, especially within regional integration areas. In addition, the data are not always entered into the administrative database in accordance with the normal statistical standards of quality (Pember and Djerma 2005). Thus, the data content of administrative records, although rich in detail, often remains insufficiently exploited.

Among the limitations of official statistics from administrative sources is that they fail to capture irregular migration, or pay insufficient attention to qualitative elements of information, such as working conditions or respect for the rights of migrant workers.

The particular strength of population censuses and surveys is that they yield information that is used only for the production of statistics. This means that information provided through surveys does not have direct consequences for the responding person or organization who are thus able to reply without constraint or apprehension. The reliability of the information derived from statistical sources is therefore relatively high compared to administrative records (Hoffmann and Lawrence, 1995).

A drawback of population censuses is that the collection costs for survey data are relatively high and the information obtained is not always timely. Population censuses are normally only conducted once every ten years.

Special household surveys, such as annual labour force surveys, also have limitations. They tend to suffer from small sample sizes, particularly for small groups such as migrant workers. This reduces the comprehensiveness of data, particularly with regard to stocks and flows, even if detailed labour force information is collected from them. Another drawback to household surveys is that they often do not collect information from collective housing or group quarters, where many migrant workers often live.

3.2 Improving the Reliability and Accuracy of Existing Data Sources?

(a) Using complementary sources to improve data reliability

No single data source can meet all needs, and governments must carefully choose the source(s) of statistics concerning their strengths and limitations to develop a system of labour migration statistics that is both comprehensive and as statistically sound as possible. Users will need to relate statistics from different sources in order to make statistics more coherent and consistent in regard to concepts, definitions and units of measurement.

(i) Centralizing data collection

Some of the countries that rely on population registers as a source of their international migration statistics, including on labour migration, have sought to link these registers with other registration systems that are more directly concerned with the employment situation, such as social security and tax registrations (Hoffmann and Lawrence, 1995). A good example of centralized data collection can be found in Scandinavian countries where different data sets are linked. All vital events (births, deaths, marriages, etc.) and demographic characteristics, such as age, marital status, citizenship and number of children, among others, are registered against a Personal Identification Number (PIN), which is assigned to any migrant included in the central population register. In addition, a number of registers in the private and governmental sectors that are relevant for the labour market, including employment, educational attainment and activity records, use the same PIN. From this information it is possible to reconstruct the individual demographic and labour market biographies of a migrant (Aalandslid, 2006). Other countries with centralized registers, such as Belgium and the Netherlands, have followed the example of Scandinavian countries of improving links between diverse sets of administrative records (Poulain and Perrin, 2003).

Similar initiatives to move away from statistics based on documents to those based on the person have also been introduced in countries that do not rely on population registers. For example, Australia has sought to improve its border registration statistics by introducing a unique person identifier for each arrival/departure passenger card record to match it to other passport movement transactions within the immigration system. This measure is intended to avoid double counting and to provide more accurate data on movements to and from Australia (Corr et al., 2005).

Some countries operate centralized statistical systems with a single agency being responsible for the coordination and operation of the national statistical system. Other countries have decentralized systems in which sectoral ministries are responsible for a range of statistical services. In decentralized systems there may be a need for greater coordination to improve the coherence and consistency of the data collected and to ensure that statistical services of sectoral ministries receive the necessary technical and political support. These considerations may have prompted countries like the Philippines to set up a specialized body coordinating the compilation of migration related statistics. To obtain a more accurate estimate of overseas Filipino emigration, the Philippines set up a Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO). As the Secretariat of the Inter-Agency Working Group on the Shared Government Information System on Migration, the Commission compiles annual estimates of the number of Filipino citizens abroad from a range of sources, including the emigrant registration system of CFO and statistics on departing overseas Filipino workers (Castro, 2006).

(ii) Greater use of statistical sources of information such as household surveys

A major drawback in using migration information from administrative records is that the administrative rationale for their collection may be quite different from their intended ultimate use as migration statistics. For this purpose, population censuses and surveys are often preferable methods of data collection, as illustrated by evolving practice in the U.S. For many years, the U.S. Census Bureau relied on administrative records from the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in its annual estimates of international migration. The concern for comparability when using administrative (flow) data to measure a stock population has led the Census Bureau to turn to census data to improve the estimates of international migration, especially after the development of new nationally representative household surveys.

Timeliness remains an important issue nonetheless. Population censuses are normally conducted once every ten years. National statistical authorities have therefore tried to reduce the interval between population censuses. For example, the new American Community Survey can provide quality data on an annual basis through new sampling and outreach techniques. The more frequent collection of census data now enables the U.S. Census Bureau to provide more timely data on the year-to-year change in the foreign population (Norris and Costanzo, 2005).

While population censuses provide broadly aggregated information on labour migration, annual labour force surveys enable closer analysis of the situation. Labour force surveys are standard household-based surveys of work-related statistics, but may also include questions on place of birth, citizenship and previous residence, as well as other aspects of migration, such as reasons for moving. The samples of these surveys are quite large and representative of the country's working-age population. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is currently testing a number of migration-related questions for inclusion in international labour surveys, Armenia being one of the test countries (Schachter, 2006).

(b) Improving comparability of data sources

Greater reliability of data collection systems does not necessarily guarantee comparability of data between countries. This is becoming an important concern because the comparability of national and regional migration flows and stocks of migrants is an essential prerequisite for the proper study and understanding of the functioning of international labour market dynamics. International bodies, such as the United Nations and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat), are prominently involved in coordinating efforts to harmonize data on migration, including labour migration. The approaches to improving comparability of migration data may take different forms: (i) top-down approaches where data harmonization is the result of national

data collection systems adjusting to internationally recognized definitions and recommendations on international migration statistics; and (ii) bottom-up approaches where data harmonization is a by-product of enhanced data-sharing mechanisms among states.

(i) Top-down approaches to data harmonization

Top-down approaches are particularly associated with the UN system. Outside the UN framework, Eurostat and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are actively involved in data harmonization.

A basic working method adopted by the UN system is the development of recommendations on international migration statistics, such as the definitions and sources to be used to measure international migration stocks and flows (Bilsborrow, 1997). The UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration were adopted by the UN Statistical Commission in 1976. Much of UN activity in the field of international migration statistics is aimed at encouraging states to adopt and collect data on the basis of the UN Recommendations. Given both the changes in international migration and continuing lack of uniformity among countries in the collection of data, the Recommendations were subject to expert review and a revised set was published in 1998 (UN DESA, Statistics Division, 1998).

One way in which international bodies promote data harmonization is through standardized data collection programmes in which countries are requested to provide data not only on the basis of existing practices, but also adjusted to correspond as far as possible to the UN recommendations. Since the latter half of the 1990s, Eurostat, the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the UN Statistics Division (UNSD), the ILO and the Council of Europe have set up a joint data collection programme in order to reduce the response burden on governments caused by the duplication of data collection efforts. A joint questionnaire has been developed and agreed to. Governments are requested to present data matching as closely as possible the internationally recommended definitions of long-term and short-term migrants. The joint questionnaire includes a range of questions related to migrant workers and the labour force. In order to understand problems of international comparability in the data, it is requested that countries should highlight, for each of the data items, any differences in definition between the national data supplied and the standard definitions published in the UN recommendations (Herm, 2006).

Greater regional economic and political integration can also trigger efforts to harmonize data at the regional level. In Europe, for example, the gradual extension of EU decisions in the field of migration has prompted demands for reliable and timely Community statistics. The 2007 Regulation on Community statistics on migration and international protection[2] constitutes a milestone in the harmonization of migration statistics. Until the adoption of this measure, harmonization of statistics was mainly governed by informal agreements (Poulain et al., 2006) among Member States, but now, for the first time, there is a legally binding regulation concerning migration statistics across the whole of the European Union. The Regulation establishes common standards for the collection of statistics relating to international migration flows, foreign population stocks, acquisition of citizenship, asylum applications and decisions, measures taken against unauthorized entry and stay, returns of irregular migrants, and residence permits issued to third-country nationals. The focus of this Regulation is on harmonized statistical outputs, with common definitions based on existing and forthcoming EU measures relating to immigration, border management

[2] Regulation (EC) No. 9862/2007 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 July 2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No. 311/76 on the compilation of statistics on foreign workers, OJ 2007 L 199/3.

and asylum issues, and on established international standards (EUROPA, 2007).

An important criticism of the UN recommendations is that they approach international migration from a demographic rather than labour market perspective. The OECD has started to redress this international bias towards a demographic perspective on international migration by encouraging harmonization of international migration statistics on the basis of residence permit statistics. The OECD has no authority to impose changes in national data collection procedures. It mainly collects statistics through its continuous reporting system (Herm, 2006). However, in the 2006 and 2007 editions of the SOPEMI report, *International Migration Outlook*, the OECD changed its approach and used residence permit statistics rather than traditional sources[3] to harmonize statistics on flows of long-term migrants. This enables the OECD to provide more information on the composition of migration flows, including the inflows of migrants for the purpose of work (OECD, 2006; Lemaître, 2006). Residence permits are used to regulate the duration of stay and economic activities of migrants and therefore provide a good basis for statistics on labour migration.

(ii) Bottom-up approaches: harmonization as the result of data sharing

While initiatives to improve the quality of data on migration have been particularly stimulated by international organizations, pairs or groups of countries have also collaborated bilaterally by establishing inventories of data sources and definitions, proposing data comparisons and developing other efforts towards data comparability. All this work has helped to illuminate and explain the inconsistencies in the data and show the way to possible solutions.

For example, under the umbrella of Eurostat, bilateral migration flows between Belgium, on the one hand, and Denmark, Sweden and Italy, on the other, were compared on the basis of anonymous individual records (Herm, 2006; Perrin and Poulain, 2003). Individual events were matched using age, sex and citizenship, date of migration and code of municipality of arrival and departure, as a result of which it was possible to estimate the impact of missing records of immigrants.

There are also data collection projects where the sharing of relevant migration data between states is the primary aim rather than harmonization of migration data. However, greater harmonization of data collection among participating states may often be a positive additional consequence of such data sharing (IOM, 2003; Folden et al., 2007).

Some of these data-sharing mechanisms are the concrete outcomes of Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs) (see Chapter 13). For example, the oldest RCP in the field of migration, the Inter-Governmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC), has had experience in the collection of data on asylum and refugees from participating states since 1992. The data submitted are operational rather than statistical and follow a national rather than a pre-designed format. Participating states may nevertheless adjust their national practices in the light of the practices and data submitted by other states (Folden et al., 2007). The end result is a de facto harmonization process over a period of time.

Broader in focus than the IGC's data-sharing mechanism is the Statistical Information System on Migration in Mesoamerica (SIEMMES), which includes information on migrant workers. SIEMMES is also a product of an RCP, the Regional Consultation on Migration, also known as the Puebla Process. The data shared are from statistical sources, such as population censuses, household surveys and entry and departure records, and are standardized according to five variables: type of movement, age,

[3] Most of the OECD Member States base their official statistics on other sources than residence-based statistics, such as population registers, border collection statistics and similar data. Therefore, there may be discrepancies between the country's official data and OECD statistics.

border point crossing, sex and nationality (Folden et al., 2007).

Some of the data-sharing projects also focus specifically on capacity-building assistance, especially in cases where some of the participating states lack adequate capacity to collect data. A good example of this approach is the "General Model" for the Collection, Application and Sharing of Migration-related Data, developed by IOM and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) upon the request of participating OSCE countries in eastern Europe and Central Asia. The "Model" combines data sharing with targeted capacity building through the mapping of the national infrastructure and holding of specific training modules and workshops at national and regional level. The "Model" was first pilot tested in Moldova, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Ukraine (Folden et al., 2007; see also Textbox 9.1).

Textbox 9.1

The "General Model" for the Collection, Application and Sharing of Migration-related Data – An Emerging Approach

Introduction

At the workshop on Organizational Structures, Collection and Sharing of Migration-related Data, held in Prague in July 2002, hosted by the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), IOM and the Government of the Czech Republic, and representatives from eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) called for the establishment of a mechanism to facilitate the systematic, timely and reliable exchange of migration-related data, both at the national and regional level. In response, IOM, OSCE/ODIHR – with inputs from the Inter-Governmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC), and the Danish Immigration Service – initiated the Programme for the Creation of a General Model for the Collection, Application and Sharing of Migration-related Data in early 2003 (hereinafter "The Model").

All countries in EECA were invited to take part in the Programme – at the regional level or nationally (pilot countries are Kazakhstan, Moldova and Ukraine, with initial introductory activities being carried out in Belarus, the Russian Federation, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan).

The Model

For those countries interested in and committed to developing and enhancing their statistical infrastructure, the "Model" offers a flexible, proactive approach to data management. The Model can be used for all types of migration data. Its elements can be applied at different times and in a different order and are therefore not mutually exclusive, nor do they represent an "all or nothing" approach. The Model recognizes that the reality of migratory trends is based on **timely, consistent** and **objective** data which already exist – though not necessary shared – in the country. The approach also includes an important principle of connecting **producers** and **users** of migration-related data.

The "Model" includes the following elements:

- Establishment of a national network, including core institutions, which handle migration data with well-defined focal points (national institutions) coordinating activities at the national level and facilitating regional exchange of agreed-upon data.
- Mapping out existing statistical infrastructures, including the definition of data governments wish to collect and share (where, when, why, how and by whom).
- Identification of the national demand for migration data at different levels and of a minimum set of 5-10 aggregated, overall data indicators recognized and recognizable for the country concerned, e.g. asylum data, labour migration, data on cross-border flows and some demographic variables. Documentation for the data is essential.

- Establishment of a data-sharing mechanism with data that are not necessarily comparable (i.e. minimum format), yet will enable the sharing of information and data in an informal, transparent and effective manner. Data sharing occurs electronically on the basis of agreed principles. It is driven by the network and, depending on user needs, can be gradually expanded by adding new data indicators, increasing the frequency of data collection (from annual to semi-annual and quarterly data submission) and introducing new data categories (i.e. gender, age, occupation).
- A homepage on the web for the exchange of information on statistical, policy and legal issues of relevance for understanding and using the data.
- Regional workshops for countries with a view to exchanging effective practices, discussing new issues and approaches, and identifying common trends of interest in the region.
- Training modules which satisfy regional and national demand for basic training on different issues related to data collection, sharing and management. Study tours are also envisaged.
- National projects developed in response to national needs and priorities.

***Source**: Folden et al. (2007: Annex 1).*

4. New Challenges in Collecting Labour Migration Data

As discussed in Part A of the Report, employment-related mobility across and within borders is becoming increasingly more complex and diverse. The geographic origin, direction and the nature of flows continue to change and new migratory patterns emerge. Established categories of data collection are therefore no longer sufficient to capture the complexity of labour-related migratory movements (Hovy, 2006) or to promote understanding of attendant policy issues. New data collection strategies are therefore required to explore these emerging realities, including:

- Transnational communities/diasporas
- Return and circular migration
- Migration of the highly skilled
- Remittances
- Irregular migration
- Outcomes/impacts of migration

4.1 Transnational Communities/Diasporas

There is growing awareness in countries of origin of the potential benefits of migration for economic and social development (see Chapter 12). Consequently, their governments have become interested to obtain more reliable information on the size and characteristics of their expatriate communities. As discussed earlier, their statistics on emigration often cannot meet these needs. Most governments are reluctant or unable to closely monitor the exit of their own nationals and emigrants often do not have much incentive to notify the authorities of their departure. Departures, therefore, tend to be less well recorded than arrivals. This applies to both stocks and flows. Once these persons have left the country, they are difficult to seize statistically. Censuses and sample surveys, which collect information on the resident population, are not designed to yield statistical returns on absent persons and have difficulty in trying to do so, especially when no family member is present in the country of origin (UNECE/Eurostat Taskforce, 2006).

One possible way of compensating for the weakness of emigration data is to use existing immigration data in countries of destination. Some international bodies have pioneered the use of immigration data of countries of destination to estimate the size of diaspora communities. An example of such practice is the Database on Foreign-born and Expatriates developed by the OECD. Using data mainly from the 2000 census and national statistical offices, the OECD obtained statistics on the foreign-born population for each OECD Member State by country of birth and educational attainment (Dumont and Lemaître, 2004). A more comprehensive version of the OECD

database, the Bilateral Migration Matrix, was recently developed by the World Bank and the University of Sussex in the U.K. (Parson et al., 2005). The Matrix covers more countries than the OECD database and provides time-series data on the stock of emigrants.

There are also activities that focus on developing guidelines to improve emigration data. On the basis of a data exchange exercise in which 19 countries participated, a UNECE/Eurostat Taskforce proposed a set of guidelines for measuring emigration through the use of immigration statistics of countries of destination (UNECE/Eurostat Taskforce, 2006).

4.2 Return and Circular Migration

Return and circular migration hold considerable benefits for countries of origin (see also Chapters 11 and 12). For instance, it is widely acknowledged that circular migration and, in some cases, the return migration of highly skilled nationals have benefited China and India by promoting skills transfer and creating social and economic linkages to important export markets (Kapur and McHale, 2005). Short-term return migration is difficult to capture statistically as this type of migration does not necessarily involve a change of usual residence. Furthermore, to measure the flow of nationals poses an even greater challenge, as data collection on inflows and outflows of nationals is usually poorer than for non-nationals.

Movement-based data collection systems, such as the one used in Australia, are more likely to capture this type of migration flow than those that focus primarily on stock data. Australia is able to gather useful information on departures because of the high quality of its border controls, which allow close measurement of border movements. However, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) identifies the increasing frequency and complexity of international travel as one of the key challenges to measuring migration (see also Chapter 5). Many of the legally defined long-term travellers interrupt their 12-month stay, and there is discrepancy between the intended and actual length of stay. The ABS is responding to this particular challenge by matching movement records of individual travellers to build up movement histories (ABS, 2006).

Few initiatives to measure circular/short-term movements are as systematic as the one used in Australia. Evidence of circular migration is often acquired incidentally through related data collection activities. For example, the National Agricultural Workers Survey, conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor, specifically targets the nature of agricultural work through an employment-based, random survey of the demographic and employment characteristics of crop workers hired in the U.S. The Employment and Migration Profile components of the survey cover the profile and history of all farm workers including occupation, type of non-agricultural work if employed off-farm, periods of unemployment and time spent outside the U.S., and the respondent's whereabouts for every week of the year preceding the interview. Thus, the survey provides detailed information on circular migration among foreign farm workers.[4]

4.3 Migration of the Highly Skilled

Detailed information about the emigration and flow of highly skilled individuals (see Chapter 2) is in high demand, especially in countries experiencing a rapid loss of human capital owing to this type of migration (Diallo, 2004).

As in the case of data on emigration more generally, several international organizations have launched initiatives to improve the availability of data on the movements of highly skilled persons. As discussed earlier, the OECD database includes statistics on

[4] See the U.S. Department of Labor website at http://www.doleta.gov/agworker/naws.cfm (Employment and Training Administration).

the foreign-born population for each OECD country by educational attainment. The World Bank has developed a similar database with greater coverage of countries and drawing on a wider range of data sources. The World Bank has also conducted a series of econometric studies on the impact of highly skilled migration on the economy of the country of origin (World Bank, 2006; Özden and Schiff, 2005).

These databases rely on statistics collected by host countries of highly skilled migrants. Few attempts have been made to assess the actual or potential level of highly skilled emigration from countries of origin. Although they are often the most affected in social or economic terms by the emigration of their highly skilled nationals, developing countries lack the resources to set up appropriate data collection mechanisms. Most initiatives in this field remain based on specialized surveys conducted by academic research institutions, such as the Potential Skills Base Survey of the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP), to assess the propensity to emigrate of final-year students at training institutions across the region. It is nonetheless encouraging to note that many developing countries are now calling for more importance to be accorded to the collection of reliable data on highly skilled emigration, as illustrated by the recent decision of the National Statistics Offices in India and Sri Lanka to identify the development of improved tools for the measurement of highly skilled migration as a priority for future work (Castro, 2006; Gunasekera, 2006).

4.4 Remittances

In recent years, remittances have received increased attention because of their visible and positive impacts on the economies of countries of origin. Relevant data for measuring remittances are collated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) from national data compiled and reported by appropriate statistical authorities in IMF member countries, and reported as part of the IMF's Global Balance of Payments (BOP) statistics (Bilsborrow, 1997).

Useful as they are, however, official remittance data derived from BOP suffer from certain limitations. These include the inability of banks to distinguish between short and long-term migrants; lack of information about "informal" (e.g. hand-carried) or "in kind" remittances; the exclusion of transactions made at money transfer centres (which comprise a large percentage of remittances); the inability to identify flows (i.e. the origin and destination of remittances); and different recording and reporting practices of BOP across and even within countries over time (UN DESA, 2005; Schachter, 2006).

Detailed data on remittances are usually obtained from surveys. When they are conducted, nationally representative household surveys of income usually include questions on remittances, although they are not always identified separately. Specialized surveys on remittances and migration are also conducted on an ad hoc basis, for example to study remittance "corridors" and sending and receiving practices. There are also a number of surveys sponsored by the World Bank that include questions on migrant remittances, such as Living Standard Measurement Surveys (LSMS). The LSMS multi-topic questionnaires are designed to study multiple aspects of household welfare and behaviour, including remittances, and have been used for remittance corridor studies. IOM has also developed specialized surveys to explore the relationship between migration patterns and remittances (IOM, 2005, 2006; Petree and Baruah, 2007). Rather than conducting specialized surveys, ILO has developed a project that uses standard labour force surveys to measure remittances on the assumption that adding a migration module to pre-existing surveys reduces costs while ensuring a large sample size (Schachter, 2006).

4.5 Irregular Migration

As measures to prevent or reduce irregular employment and migration gain increasing prominence, reliable information on the size, structure and dynamics of irregular migration becomes more important. By its very definition, irregular migration is difficult to capture statistically as it concerns (mainly) undocumented and covert events. There are no official statistics on irregular migration. Statements about the magnitude of this phenomenon tend to draw on statistics of observed events that are usually collected for law enforcement purposes (e.g. by the police and border guards). Given the sensitivity surrounding this type of information, such data are rarely shared and generally not released for public use.

An exception is the data flowing from the Centre for Information, Discussion and Exchange on the Crossing of Frontiers and Immigration (CIREFI) developed by the European Commission and Eurostat. CIREFI is the only available Europe-wide source of data on law enforcement measures taken in the field of irregular migration. Three types of published data from the CIREFI database are linked to irregular migration: refusal of entry, apprehension of non-citizens present without authorization and foreigners removed.

Different assessments of the data show that all three types are inadequate to capture the various levels and trends in irregular migration. For example, the data on apprehensions submitted to CIREFI's database by EU Member States may not distinguish between stocks and flows, while data on refusal of entry often do not distinguish between the reasons for such refusals. Similarly, the data on removals do not specify the type and category of removals in question. The EU Regulation to govern national statistics, referred to earlier in Section 3.2(b)(i), may present an opportunity to improve the quality of the CIREFI data (Poulain and Singleton, 2006).

Another rich source of data on irregular migration is the annual survey and analysis of border management and border apprehensions carried out by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in central and eastern Europe. Besides data on border apprehensions, removal of non-citizens and refusal of entry, the survey yields data on the demographic breakdown of irregular migrants and information on their particular routes. ICMPD, the European Police Office (EUROPOL) and FRONTEX, the European agency for coordination of cooperation between EU Member States in the field of border management, have also sought to improve the data exchange and information on irregular migration from the Mediterranean basin and Africa to Europe by developing a map on African and Mediterranean Irregular Migration Routes[5] in the framework of the ongoing Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM).

A more reliable official source of data on irregular migration can be derived from regularization exercises, if and when they occur (see Chapters 8 and 11). Regularization data can provide an estimate of the stock of irregular migrants, although not all irregular migrants may decide to seek or be eligible for regularization. Explanatory notes on the specific conditions of regularization programmes are, therefore, important to interpret the estimate of irregular migrants derived from regularization figures (Jandl and Kraler, 2006).

There are also databases that contain data on special categories of irregular migrants, such as trafficked persons. One such database, the Global Human Trafficking Database (see Textbox 8.2), has been developed by IOM to gather data from the counter-trafficking programmes it conducts. A unique feature of this database is that the information is collected directly from the victims of trafficking and therefore

[5] For this map, see the FRONTEX web site at http://www.frontex.eu.int/gfx/frontex/files/mtmmapen.pdf.

provides a rich source of qualitative and quantitative data on this type of migration (see Textbox 8.2).

4.6 Evaluating the Outcomes or Impacts of Migration

As migration acquires increasing prominence on the socio-economic agendas of many countries of origin and of destination, it spurs demand for information on outcomes and/or the impacts of migration on the economy and society. All public implementing agencies of migration programmes resort to some form of evaluation to accompany a number or all stages of the policy cycle, i.e. ex ante to assess the anticipated impact and viability of planned policies and programmes; at mid-term to assess the ongoing outputs of policies and programmes; and ex post to measure the final outcome and impact of policies, and their sustainability. Countries with long experience of employment-based migration are particularly advanced in developing the appropriate tools to gather data for ex post evaluations of labour migration programmes and policies. As the integration of immigrants is essential to ensure social cohesion and public support for particular programmes, the efforts in these countries are particularly focused on gathering data on the labour market outcomes of immigrants.

An example of good practice in obtaining outcome data is the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia, which interviews cohorts of immigrants at regular intervals during three years after their arrival. Data are collected on labour market outcomes and a range of other settlement indicators, including housing, health and settlement services. Plans are also under way to link this database with census data to provide more detailed information on how migrants fare after longer intervals following their arrival (ABS, 2006).

The impact of the emigration of health workers on the health sector is a particularly significant concern in many African countries. There is a great need for the accurate projection of human resource development needs in this area, as well as means of measuring losses of skilled personnel through emigration. The World Health Organization (WHO) assists developing countries in their efforts to meet these needs through special survey work and research, and its World Health Survey aims to provide a range of quantitative information that can be used to assess population health and health systems. This survey, conducted in more than 70 countries, includes follow-up questions on migration (Diallo et al., 2003).

5. Linking Data and Research with Policymaking

The collection and processing of appropriate data is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition to provide a government with adequate information to guide and support the decisions to be made. Data providers often face the challenge of how to present the information collected for use by policymakers. The latter work in a fast-paced environment and do not have the time to engage in the intricacies of statistical analysis. They demand timely information that addresses directly the issues at hand. A "filter" is therefore needed to convert the analytical information into a format more readily usable by policymakers, while respecting the complexities of the issues.

One filter some governments have adopted is the creation of inter-ministerial working groups composed of both data users and providers. The dialogue between data users and providers sensitizes data providers to the needs of users when designing new, or adjusting existing, data-collection methods. For example, in Denmark, an ongoing data user and provider dialogue has made it easier to publish commonly defined statistics and to agree on common principles underlying the definition and compilation of statistical indicators (Folden et al., 2007).

Research networks are another mechanism for the improvement of the dissemination of migration statistics and research that has recently received

considerable attention from donors. Research networks have, potentially at least, the dual advantage of ensuring broader dissemination of migration data and research, while building local capacity for conducting policy-relevant research. They are also flexible structures that can easily be extended to incorporate other existing networks. Research networks are therefore often regarded as the appropriate tool to overcome the divide between developed and developing countries in terms of research capacity and technological resources (Costello and Alimuddin, 2000; Wickramasekara, 2006).

Two models of research networks prevail: (a) academic-based networks, which focus on capacity building, primarily among scholars, and promote academic research on migration; and (b) the electronic web networks that focus primarily on cataloguing information, networking institutions and other research communities, and disseminating policy-relevant information (Laczko and Long, 2006).

Each type has its specific strengths and weaknesses in the dissemination of policy-relevant information. Academic-based networks[6] may not produce the kind of research that policymakers require. Policymakers need rapidly available results in order to make timely decisions, and cannot wait for the kind of long-term, in-depth research preferred by academics. However, through research training, seminars and research competitions, these networks can stimulate new research initiatives and disseminate new tools to analyse data of use to policymakers.

In contrast, the issues of timeliness and accessibility do not arise with electronic web networks because information can be accessed instantly and shared publicly. They can be useful mechanisms in regional integration processes, such as the European Union, to ensure synergies and avoid overlaps among existing networks. For instance, the purpose of the EU-sponsored European Migration Network (EMN) is to: (a) provide a clearing house to filter and synthesize information; (b) develop comparable up-to-date information on legal and policy developments related to migration and asylum in EU Member States; and (c) provide accurate, up-to-date and comparable statistical data on migration and asylum (Laczko and Long, 2006; Folden et al., 2007; Kraler and Jandl, 2006). The EMN relies largely on a web of national focal points to keep track of developments in their respective countries and transmit and exchange timely information. On the other hand, electronic web networks such as this may not be conducive to generating the kind of network opportunities that arise from face-to-face encounters in research seminars or training workshops. To ensure maximum productivity and results, electronic web networks need to rely not only on virtual but also face-to-face exchanges between users and producers through training and capacity-building workshops (Laczko and Long, 2006). The EMN has, therefore, introduced regular meetings for national focal points to maximize the exchange between EU Member States.

The coordination of activities at the national level related to data harmonization may become a more important activity for regional research networks as it is included on the agendas of regional integration and trade regimes in different parts of the world. One recent illustration of this trend was a study on the prospects of migration data harmonization in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region (Williams and Tsang, 2007) by the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP), an international network of organizations founded in 1996 to promote awareness of migration-development linkages in SADC, with the help of IOM.

[6] One of the first academic networks set up in the field of migration is the Asia Pacific Migration Research Network (APMRN), funded primarily by UNESCO and based at Wollongong University in Australia. APMRN has a network of partner institutions in Australia, China, Fiji, Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, and implements projects related to the "social and political aspects of international migration and growing ethno-cultural diversity as major factors in the social transformation of the societies of the Asia-Pacific region" (APMRN, 2002).

6. Conclusion

As labour migration becomes more prevalent at the global level, the demand for reliable and comparable statistics on migration for employment becomes more insistent. The changing nature of current labour mobility makes the task of harmonizing statistics on international migration more complex. As new categories of labour migration flows are emerging, their origins and destinations also diversify. How these particular challenges are addressed will depend partly on the development of new concepts of measurement and data collection techniques, but also on improved quality of the administrative data collected for different labour migration programmes.

It is commonly recognized that governments require an appropriate knowledge base to effectively manage migration. It is also acknowledged that this is particularly so in the area of labour migration. Three types of initiatives to enhance the national knowledge base were discussed in this chapter, concerning: (i) the improvement of the reliability and comparability of existing data sources; (ii) the gathering of new data on emerging issues, especially regarding labour migration; and (iii) the dissemination and utilization of data and research on labour migration.

The chapter has also emphasized the importance of recognizing and catering to different data needs at the policy, programme and case management level. Success in this endeavour will depend on the development of a comprehensive approach to the collection, analysis and dissemination of data through the mobilization and coordination of all national bodies and instrumentalities involved, both generally in international migration management and specifically in the management of labour flows.

However, to be fully productive and meaningful, these national efforts need to be complemented by broader regional and global endeavours with the support of appropriate international bodies to promote the adoption of a new culture of measurement, record keeping and exchange of information in this field.

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