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# Evidence Base for Labour Migration Analysis and Policy

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# **Evidence base for labour migration analysis and policy**

Revised version of a presentation for  
the LO Working Group on Labour  
Migration Statistics.

By

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# Structure of the presentation

- Key messages
- Major policy needs for migration statistics and information
- Gaps between policy requirements and available statistics
- Some examples
- Issues for discussion

# Key Messages

- Knowledge and information are critical to formulate, implement and evaluate labour migration policy and practice, and therefore its collection and application should be given priority. (ILO multilateral Framework on Labour Migration)
- Data analysis cannot be separated from data collection, presentation and dissemination.
- Labour migration information is a subset of broader labour market information and labour statistics, involving both quantitative and qualitative aspects.
- Even available data are not being effectively used for policy making.
- The misuse and abuse of migration data for political and other purposes should be avoided.
- Close interaction among producers and users is crucial to ensure relevance and quality. National Statistical Offices (NSOs), Ministries of Labour, etc.

# Terminology

- Migration information and statistics: quantitative and qualitative (Conventions, laws, rules, procedures) and indicators: Stocks and flows
- Emigration and immigration –outflow and inflow
- Mixed character of migration: movements; countries of origin, destination and transit
- Categories of migrants: permanent & temporary and circular; long-term and short-term; male and female migrant workers; regular and irregular status; forced migrants ( refugees, asylum seekers), temporary service providers (GATS); Foreign-born and native born; Citizens and non-citizens.
- Migration policy covers Governance of migration, Protection of migrant workers and Promotion of migration-development linkages (ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration)

# Recognition of evidence base for migration policy

- ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration: Principle 3
- 8 Point action Plan of UN Secretary-General for 2013 High Level Dialogue - Point 7: Strengthen the migration evidence base
- High level Dialogue on international migration and development, 2013: Point 28.
- Conclusions of ILO Tripartite Meeting on Labour Migration 2013
  - As the leading agency on labour migration, engage in evidence-based, policy-oriented research and data development on how workers' rights, wages and other working and living conditions impact on development outcomes for migrant workers and countries of origin and destination
- ILO Fair Migration Agenda 2014:
  - the ILO will need to reinforce its statistics and knowledge base in respect of migration
- 2015: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Indicators (17.18)
- The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants adopted by the United Nations on 19 September, 2016; Para 40.

# Who are users of migration information?

- Governments: ministries concerned with labour, home affairs, immigration, justice, planning and development, health, education and HRD, skills development, finance
- Politicians
- Social partners
  - Employers in COO and COD
  - Trade unions in COO and COD
- Civil society to advocate, support and protect migrant workers: e.g.
  - Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants PICUM; MFA - Migrant Forum in Asia
- Media
- Researchers
- International and regional organizations and donor agencies
- Migrant workers and their families

# Why do we need labour migration information and data

- Contribute to informed debates on immigration and emigration policies nationally, regionally and internationally
- Protection of migrant workers; monitor compliance with international standards
- Improve policies for better migration governance
- Migrant workers themselves need a variety of information to make informed decisions.
- Fighting racism, xenophobia, stereotyping against migrant workers
- Integrating migration into national development planning
- Monitoring SDGs



# Illustrative data needs – origin and host countries

## ORIGIN COUNTRIES

- Overseas markets and demand for workers; sectors, occupations, skills.
- Migrant workers abroad: stocks, annual outflows and profile
- Conditions of work of nationals abroad; treatment
- Remittances by workers abroad
- Return migration & circulation
- Impact on the local labour market and human resources
- Diaspora engagement

## HOST COUNTRIES

- Labour market needs for foreign workers: sectors, occupations, skills
- Numbers and profiles of those admitted under different programmes;
- Impact on the local labour market; employment, wages, work conditions
- Numbers in irregular status and their characteristics
- Targeting social protection and integration policies and programmes

# Evaluation criteria for data

- Accuracy and reliability
- Coverage – partial or comprehensive – officially recorded flows; regular and irregular migration
- Timeliness and frequency
- Consistency:
  - E.g. whether definitions, coverage change over time.
- Relevance and usefulness to policy needs
- Comparability – across countries & over time; harmonization, international standards
- Access and transparency

# Some examples of data generation linked to policy - ILO

- ILO surveys on discrimination against migrant and ethnic workers: Europe, Canada; has influenced policy revisions in Belgium, France, Italy, Sweden
- ILO Afghan displacement surveys – Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan 2004-2006
- The International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS) Database for ASEAN
- Regional Office for Arab States: surveys on working and living conditions of migrant workers in Kuwait and UAE 2009-2010

# ILO research on labour market discrimination

- ILO research project on *Combating Discrimination Against Migrant and Ethnic Minority Workers in The World of Work – from 1991..*
- The objectives: to reduce discrimination against migrant and ethnic minority workers by informing relevant parties:
  - Documenting and demonstrating discrimination
  - identifying remedial measures and developing approaches to evaluating effectiveness of different measures.
- The countries covered: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- The findings show significant, similar, and disturbing levels of discrimination in access to employment – 35% rate of discrimination meaning that in more than one out of three application procedures regular immigrant workers were discriminated against.
- Conclusion: Allowing for other objective factors, immigrant workers experience illegal discrimination on the grounds of their actual or perceived nationality, colour, religion, “race”, or ethnic origin.
- Directly influenced policy: Belgium, France, Italy, etc.

# Discrimination rates

	Belgium	Germany	Netherlan ds	Spain	Italy
First stage: telephone call	19	13	23	25	27
Second stage: invitation to interview	12	6	9	8	12
Third stage: offer of work	2	not done	5	3	2
Total rate of discrimination	33	19*	37	36	41

\* partial estimate only.

Source: ILO/ de Beijil, 2000; Italy, ILO International Migration Papers MP No.67

# Afghan displaced population

- Surveys in Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan
  - Iran: surveys of Afghan households (1505) and an Establishments survey with employers (1049) and Afghan workers (2102), Iranian workers (1261) and supplemented by 25 case studies
  - Afghanistan- surveys of returnees
- Established that Afghan workers were not in competition with Iranian workers, and their vulnerability and low economic position
- UNHCR used results to negotiate with Iran to delay repatriation of Afghan families.

# ILO Beirut Survey on working & living conditions in Kuwait and UAE

- The surveys carried out during 2009-2010. Kuwait-1,000 workers; UAE – 1,300 workers;
- Low comparability between the two and differing quality.
- Re-coding needed in the analysis, but difficult in UAE because data collected using unrealistic groupings and codes.
  - Occupational classification; not mutually exclusive categories; had to be recoded
  - Wages, Incomes, savings, remittances according to pre-determined groups. UAE - all the observations fell into two ranges only AED500–999 and AED1,000-1,999. accounting for 60% and 40% of the total.
  - Internal consistency a problem
- Report never released: only one preliminary dissemination workshop held
- Not a good practice example given execution issues and non-dissemination

# Kerala Migration Surveys (KMS)

- Indian emigration data poor: underestimation, no sex disaggregation.
- The KMS supported by State Planning Board, Govt of Kerala, and carried out by Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum to study impact of migration – a good practice at state level
- 6 Surveys up to now: 1998, 2003, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2016
- Large surveys – about 15,000 households stratified random sampling proving statewide estimates
- The KMS 2014 included 5,000 panel households surveyed in previous surveys – provides a longitudinal panel data base on migration and remittances.
- Covers sex disaggregated profile information according to emigrants, returnees and non-resident Keralites.
- Thematic information in each survey: remittances, impact of financial crisis, female migration, etc.
- Also estimates internal migrants to other Indian states
- Feeds directly into policy since commissioned by state government
- Datasets claimed to be available to other researchers, but in practice not so according to author's experience.
- The survey has been extended to the State of Tamil Nadu in 2016.



# Sri Lanka migration statistics

- Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment outflow data
  - Since 1991 on registered outflows by sex and destinations., but delay in dissemination
  - More recently by occupations (not consistent with ISCO):
  - Skills coding (manpower level) also not standard.
  - No information on employment status prior to migration.
- Share of female and domestic workers now showing decline:
  - believed to be a policy success due to restrictions on female migration. But unregistered flows common to avoid age and family background report restrictions.
- The 2012 Pop Census: information on internal and overseas migration: one in every eleven households had at least one member temporarily living abroad, of whom 85 per cent had migrated for employment.
- National Centre of Migration Statistics previously established in the NSO (Department of Census & Statistics- DCS) thru IOM project; now defunct
- SLBFEE can now trace return migrants through a link with the Dept of Immigration servers.
- ILO commissioned Returnee survey done by research institute at govt. request but quality was poor. DCS not involved.
- Major effort needed to improve quality of migration statistics.

# Other initiatives

- OECD SOPEMI – International Migration Outlook - long standing high quality analysis of migration data with thematic issues
- UN Dept. of Economic & Social Affairs - Global Migration database
- European University Institute (EUI): Return migration & development platform (MIREM & CRIS); Gulf migration portal
- IOM Global Migration Data Analysis Centre, Berlin established recently.
- Country migration profiles supported by European Commission: IOM, ICMPD, MPC, IEU, (Florence).
- Migration Policy Group: Migrant Integration Policy Index – 38 countries; 8 policy areas and 167 indicators
- GMG Working Group on data and research since 2011
- World Bank Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) –
  - Thematic Working Group 1: Data on Migration and Remittance Flows; TWG 3 on Migration cost surveys; TWG 5 on Policy & Institutional Coherence – Policy Dashboard
- SDGs and development of indicators for migration targets

# Even existing data not used adequately for policy making

- Direct use of research by policy makers limited.
  - No linear relation between research and policy
- Lack of coordination among different national agencies
- Data are collected routinely but not processed.
- Lack of capacity for identifying, producing and compiling relevant data
- Poor interaction between users and producers of data
- Access and transparency problems.
- Poor dissemination
- Not user-friendly. Statistics in PDF only or as images

# Important gaps

- Protection data: conditions of work of migrant workers; OSH statistics
- Irregular migration; incidence and impact
- Contribution of migrant workers to host economies
- Recruitment information
- Disaporas; numbers, locations and contributions
- Recruitment practices and wider recruitment options
  - Why matching of skills needs difficult
- Integration status of temporary and permanent migrants
- Return migration and circular migration
- Focus on one aspect: immigration or emigration; Jordan, Malaysia, India, Sri Lanka

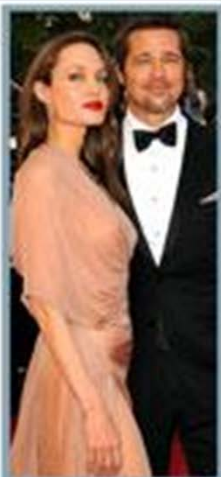
# Misuse of migration statistics

- Media reporting on recent refugee movements
- Examples
  - Security focus – migration as threat
  - Stereotyping, racism, xenophobia actions.
  - Equating irregular migration as a criminal activity.
  - Narrowing migration debates to asylum seeker and refugee issues.
  - Highlight negative aspects and ignore positive issues (e.g. contributions of migrant workers to host societies).
- UK politicians attacks on immigration not based on facts; unrealistic migration targets; treating students as immigrants; questioning EU free mobility. Migration Advisory Committee, UK is there but policy is dictated by electoral politics.
- Doctoring of statistics to please policy makers/donors should be avoided.

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# FOREIGN WORKERS GET 3 IN 4 NEW JOBS



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**82%** say no to new influx from Bulgaria and Romania  
**85%** say our schools and the NHS cannot cope  
**76%** say young Britons are losing out on jobs

# ENOUGH IS ENOUGH MR CAMERON!

**YOUTH, 17 CHARGED WITH RHYS MURDER**

**Shannon's mother on trial with man accused of kidnap**



# IMMIGRANTS BRING MORE CRIME

**IMMIGRATION** from Eastern Europe has led to a surge in crime, police chiefs warn the Home Secretary today.



**QUEEN HELEN AHOY**

# Sold out! Flights and buses full as Romanians head for the UK

By Arthur Martin in Bucharest and John Stevens in Sofia

**BULGARIANS** and Romanians were last night preparing to travel to Britain as predictions of working here are lifted tomorrow.

**Wage rates 'are five to six times higher' over here**

**BRITAIN'S** wage and benefits system makes the 'most attractive' destination for Bulgarian and Romanian immigrants, says a hard-hitting report.

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS MAY 22, 2014

**4,000 people a week come to live in Britain from the EU.**

- In the EU, we can't control our own borders
- Unlimited immigration costs British jobs
- Cheap labour pushes down British wages
- Schools, health, welfare are under pressure

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# Some lessons

- Analysts often have limited choice over data; work with what is available; no access to micro data
- Data generation is not for its own sake. Theory and conceptual framework provides the basis for organizing the data for meaningful analysis.
- To build a good story around statistics, additional research and extraneous information is needed (background information, case studies).
- Effective analysis of survey data requires involvement from the beginning. A bad survey cannot produce good analysis.
- Levels of analysis depend on users; policy makers need concise and clear messages: researchers more rigorous approaches.

# Ensuring stronger links between policy and research

- Basing research on assessment of information needs of policy makers; regular dialogue; direct commissioning by policy makers.
- Good rapport and trust between policy makers and researchers
- Quick response to official requests
- If research is time consuming, interim outputs should be disseminated.
- Appropriate modes of dissemination
  - Involve stakeholders for lobbying and advocacy
  - Different formats to suit target audience: policy makers, social partners
  - Innovative/friendly formats and packaging to influence public opinion and thereby policy
  - Effective use of media



# Role of international agencies

- International agencies should coordinate assistance to countries based on their mandate, competence, and in-house capacity - to achieve synergy and coherence.
- Improve global knowledge base and share it with developing countries
- Facilitate linkages between countries of origin and destination
- Support primary data generation in source countries
- Mobilise resources to promote migration research in developing countries
- Produce training manuals, standards, and codes of practice in cooperation.

## Way forward: International labour migration statistics for labour market and migration policies

- Generate migration statistics within a broad framework of statistics on labour markets and employment - not security perspective only.
- Promote regular consultations between users and producers.
- Involve employers and workers – the key stakeholders in labour migration in designing and implementing policy
- Strive for greater cooperation between countries of origin and host countries in arriving at better estimates of flows and stocks, wages and conditions of work.
- Need for focal point agency at country level for coordination of data collection, analysis and dissemination
- Greater coordination between different agencies in data initiatives: NSOs with line ministries – e.g. Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Immigration.