

Workshop Outcome Document

ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON IMPLEMENTING GUIDANCE ON INCLUSIVE CRVS SYSTEMS WITH A FOCUS ON FORCED DISPLACEMENT, STATELESSNESS AND CHILDREN ON THE MOVE

18-21 March 2024, Bangkok



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over 40 representatives from 11 Governments from across Asia and the Pacific convened for a joint workshop co-organized by ESCAP, UNHCR, UNICEF, EGRIS, and IDAC. Delegates, including from many development partners, discussed the role of inclusive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems as fundamental to both human rights and development agendas.

The primary objectives were:

- Enhancing understanding of methodologies related to statelessness and forced displacement statistics within CRVS frameworks.
- Facilitating exchange of best practices between nations and stakeholders.
- Highlighting challenges and exploring solutions for the inclusion of stateless and displaced groups in CRVS systems.
- Establishing areas for technical support and partnerships aligned with regional priorities.
- The participatory agenda led to increased awareness and knowledge sharing, identification of gaps in current CRVS systems and development needs, and introduction of available technical support mechanisms.

Key discussions underscored issues such as the absence of a legal stateless person definition in many national legislations, a challenge compounded by limited adherence to UN Statelessness Conventions in the region. Action points spanned national coordination directives, inequality assessments, vital statistics production guidelines, and strategies for integrating displaced and stateless people into national statistics. Emphasis was placed on legal identity inclusion, regional and international cooperation, data protections and capacity building.

Workshop conclusions advocate for holistic, coordinated action across multiple fronts, emphasizing the importance of:

- Enhancing national coordination mechanisms.
- Implementing inequality assessments of CRVS systems.
- Producing inclusive vital statistics and development indicators.
- Improving integration of displaced and stateless individuals in statistical systems.
- Fostering legal identity and ensuring integration with identity management systems.
- Boosting regional and international collaboration.
- Increasing data availability.
- Ensuring responsible data sharing through adherence to principles of protection and privacy.
- Sustaining efforts to improve CRVS systems and facilitate inclusion through resource mobilization and advocacy.

This workshop sets the stage for continued dialogues and actions toward inclusive CRVS systems in Asia Pacific, contributing to broader development outcomes and improved human rights observance.

1 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

From 18 to 21 March 2024, over 40 representatives of 11 Governments^[1] in Asia Pacific participated in a 3.5-day workshop jointly organized by ESCAP, UNHCR, UNICEF, EGRIS and IDAC, with funding support from the European Union, Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health initiative and the US-Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM). In addition to the organizing committee comprised of ESCAP, UNHCR, EGRIS, UNICEF and IDAC, also in attendance were representatives of IOM, WHO, The Regional Support Office for The Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime and Macquarie University.

As noted in the Handbook on Civil Registration, Vital Statistics and Identity Management systems, civil 'registration should be considered a national institution for the promotion and protection of human rights.' In light of the critical role of inclusive CRVS systems to improving development and human rights outcomes, the workshop aimed to strengthen the capacity of Member States to achieve inclusive CRVS systems and, thereof, to produce and use quality statistics on stateless people, forcibly displaced persons, and children on the move to strengthen planning, protection and service delivery, through:

- Introducing key resources developed by EGRIS, IDAC and ESCAP and strengthening participants' understanding of concepts and methodologies related to statelessness and forced displacement statistics and CRVS.
- Enabling exchange of experiences, best practices and lessons learned between countries and other stakeholders in ensuring inclusion in CRVS systems and producing and using statistics on statelessness and forced displacement statistics, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Identifying the main common gaps and challenges in law, policy and practice that need to be addressed and facilitate discussions around solutions and innovative approaches related to inclusion of stateless and displaced people in CRVS systems and the production and use of statistics from these systems to achieve development outcomes and improve access to rights and services.
- Identifying areas of technical support, collaboration and partnerships within wider technical and political regional priorities.

The workshop was guided by a highly participatory and interactive agenda developed collaboratively by ESCAP, UNHCR, EGRIS, UNICEF and IDAC with a focus on CRVS systems to achieve the following outputs:

- Increase in awareness, understanding and support for the inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless people in CRVS systems.
- Gaps and challenges to inclusion in these systems are identified and ways to address these are explored.
- Knowledge of and capacity to use relevant and existing guidance and tools are improved.
- Peer to peer learning between countries enabled and best practices are shared.
- Capacity development needs and priorities are identified by member states and available technical support introduced to facilitate future collaboration.





Participants listened to technical presentations from development partners, and exchanged country experiences related to challenges and opportunities in including forcibly displaced and stateless persons and children on the move in national CRVS efforts, to enhance the delivery of regional and international commitments, including the Regional Action Framework for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific, the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind, the Global Compacts for migration and refugees and UNHCR's 'Strategic plan 2023-2026: Redoubling Our Efforts on Ending Statelessness'.

Several governments highlighted that a common challenge related to ensuring that stateless people are included in censuses and CRVS systems is the lack of the definition of a 'stateless person' in national legislation, coupled with the fact that the region has few States parties to the UN Statelessness Conventions. Workshop conveners clarified that, in such circumstances, the definition of a "stateless person" established by the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons is to be applied, as it is customary international law and therefore applicable to all States, including those that are not yet a party to this instrument.¹

This report outlines the key discussions and action points from the workshop to provide a starter for discussions on ensuring inclusive CRVS systems across Asia, the Pacific and beyond. The report is more elaborate than a regular workshop report as it outlines the key global and regional recommendations and guidance related to the different aspects of how to support inclusive CRVS systems.

¹ See International Law Commission, *Articles on Diplomatic Protection with commentaries (2006)*, confirming that the definition of a 'stateless person' in Article 1 of the 1954 Convention has 'acquired a customary nature' (commentary accessible at <http://www.refworld.org/docid/525e7929d.html>). Authoritative guidance on interpreting and applying this definition has been issued by UNHCR, here: UNHCR, *Handbook on Protection of Stateless Persons* (30 June 2014), available at: <https://www.refworld.org/policy/legalguidance/unhcr/2014/en/122573>.



ACTION POINTS AND RELEVANT GUIDANCE/MANDATES

2.1 National coordination

Action points

- Utilize existing national CRVS coordination mechanisms to facilitate coordination to ensure legal identity for all, including the groups in focus during the workshop. If the existing mechanisms are not fit for purpose or do not exist, they should be adapted or established. This is of particular importance as, in many systems, whilst it may be necessary to register one vital event (such as the death of a spouse) to register another event (such as a subsequent marriage), different governmental entities are responsible for each respective event, and their systems and procedures are not yet appropriately integrated.
- Facilitate collaboration between civil registration authorities, national statistical agencies, UNHCR, and other relevant stakeholders to improve the integration of refugees, IDPs and stateless populations into protection-sensitive national statistical systems that adhere to established data protection principles.^[2] This may include establishing formal mechanisms such as task forces for data sharing and coordination, developing joint protocols and guidelines for data collection and analysis, and conducting regular meetings and workshops to exchange best practices and lessons learned. By fostering interagency collaboration, countries can enhance the quality and completeness of vital statistics for children on the move, refugees, IDPs, and stateless individuals, leading to more informed decision-making and targeted interventions to address their specific needs.
- Countries should be encouraged to include representatives from relevant government ministries, national statistical agencies, UNHCR, and other relevant stakeholders in such mechanisms. These task forces should be dedicated to integrating refugees, IDPs and stateless individuals, including children, into national statistical systems. The task forces can develop strategies, set goals, and oversee the implementation of initiatives aimed at enhancing data collection, coordination, and dissemination processes.

Guidance/mandate

- One of the implementation steps of the [Regional Action Framework for CRVS in Asia and the Pacific](#) (RAF) is to 'Establish an effective and sustainable national CRVS coordination mechanism comprising all relevant stakeholders.'
- Generally, countries report on the existence of such a mechanism. However, it is important that it is a well-functioning mechanism as laid out in the narrative on the coordination action area in the RAF:
 - 'Within countries, effective coordination among different local, provincial and national stakeholders involved in reporting, recording and registering the occurrence of vital events is essential, particularly for preventing duplication of functions and information and for facilitating the effective use of registration records for statistical purposes. It is therefore imperative that a national CRVS coordination mechanism, such as a national committee or board, functions well and comprises all sectors, including the civil registration authorities, provincial and local governments, the health and education sectors, the statistics authorities and civil society.'

- Ensure data processing adheres to established data protection principles.² EGRIS ‘emphasizes the extreme sensitivity of refugee data and the importance of confidentiality and data protection in refugee statistics’^[3] (IRRS para 11). Moreover, the ‘sensitivities surrounding the confidentiality of data require particular attention, and their data will need to be carefully protected by the statistical authorities and not shared with, for instance, immigration authorities’^[4] (IROSS para 212). Accordingly, the confidentiality of personal data³ must be safeguarded, and personal data should be used only for its specific intended purposes – a recommendation closely aligned with the principle of Purpose Specification enshrined in the UN Personal Data Protection and Privacy Principles (2018).⁴
- Coordinate the collection and reporting of refugee, IDP and statelessness statistics among different government agencies, statistical offices, and relevant stakeholders. This ensures that data collection efforts are streamlined, consistent, and avoid duplication.

Utilize inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms to include a dedicated workstream on statelessness in CRVS efforts^[5] (IROSS paras 330-332; IRIS para 370). The coordination of refugee, IDP and statelessness statistics may require a memorandum of understanding or other agreement between the statistical authorities and the relevant humanitarian focal points (e.g. information management working groups under clusters, UN country teams or humanitarian country teams) to facilitate safe and appropriate processes around data sharing, where such sharing is desirable and in line with appropriate purposes. This should cover confidentiality, harmonizing and joint data production, and sharing capacity and resources (IRRS para 535-536; IRIS para 371; and IROSS para 336).

Where immigration authorities are the first entity to collect and manage personal data, encourage collaboration, appropriate data and information sharing with statistical agencies and other relevant institutions involved in assisting refugees, IDPs and stateless populations, such as social welfare agencies, and international organizations (IRRS para 461; IROSS paras 340-360). Effective coordination at this level will facilitate the exchange of data, expertise, and best practices to enhance the quality and relevance of collected statistics. All agencies involved in the production of official statistics on refugees, IDPs and stateless persons should follow the UN *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics* and relevant national data protection and statistical standards and legislation.

National statistical legislation should align, as far as possible, with international statistical recommendations. In doing so, it should resolve legal barriers to data sharing between agencies and the national statistical authority, while protecting data providers and the confidentiality and privacy of information about individuals. A critical requirement when data is shared is ensuring that all data recipients adhere to the principle of Purpose Specification, in particular by refraining from uses that are incompatible with the rights, freedoms or interests of data subjects.⁵ In particular, it should be noted that data for statistical purposes will not usually require data to be identifiable and the level of anonymization should be as high as possible while still allowing required statistical disaggregation using the appropriate level of statistical disclosure control (IRIS paras 374-375; IROSS para 325).

2 This notably includes the [United Nations Personal Data Protection and Privacy Principles \(2018\)](#), as well as national data protection legislation. In light of the particularly vulnerable circumstances of refugees, IDPs and stateless people, their personal data is generally considered ‘sensitive’ and may thus require additional precautions to ensure safe and appropriate processing. See UNHCR, [General Policy on Personal Data and Privacy](#) (2022). This includes, inter alia, generally refraining from sharing the personal data of refugees with their country of origin without informed consent as well as requisite transparency, fairness and purpose limitation.

3 Personal data means any ‘information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’)’. See United Nations Personal Data Protection and Privacy Principles (2018), *supra* note 2.

4 These important precautions notwithstanding, certain CRVS systems still permit civil registration entities to report individuals who attempt to register vital events to the immigration authorities responsible for the application of penalties for unlawful entry or presence, such as arrest, detention or deportation. This practice can significantly undermine the confidence of undocumented and vulnerable individuals to come forward to register vital events. For refugees, asylum seekers and persons with other international protection needs, the referral of individuals to immigration enforcement actors also raises also risks of refoulement. To address these gaps and reduce associated risks,

5 United Nations Personal Data Protection and Privacy Principles (2018), *supra* note 2.

2.2 Inequality assessments

Action points

- Countries which have not yet implemented an inequality assessment of the CRVS system should do so as soon as possible.
- The type of inequality assessment depends on the conditions and context of the country and its CRVS system and can include quantitative or qualitative assessments using either primary or secondary data.
- Where an inequality assessment has been implemented, it is important to ensure that the results are disseminated to the relevant policy makers and used to address and resolve these inequalities through the respective policy reforms and interventions necessary.
- Further, countries should consider any gaps in an existing inequality assessment and look to supplementing with additional assessments.
- Countries should also consider supplementing secondary data sources such as censuses and surveys to allow better measurement of vital events and their registration.
- Ensure special consideration is given for vulnerable subgroups of populations, such as stateless children and children on the move in conducting inequality assessments.
- Collaboration with community-based organizations is of particular importance in improving access to and participation by forcibly displaced, stateless and other marginalized and hard-to-reach groups. A positive trend is the increasing emergence of community-based organizations led by refugees and stateless people themselves; where these organizations exist, efforts should be made to coordinate inequality assessment exercises with them.

Guidance/mandate

- Implementing an inequality assessment is an implementation step in the RAF:
 - ‘Assess inequalities related to CRVS experienced by subgroups of the population, including among hard-to-reach and marginalized populations and particular geographic areas and administrative subdivisions, and, where appropriate, set national targets to address those inequalities.’
- Possible groups who may need to be included in an inequality assessment were outlined in the Ministerial Declarations in [2014](#) and [2021](#) which call upon members states to do the following:
 - (2021) To conduct substantive identification and assessment of inequalities related to civil registration and vital statistics, in light of national context, regulations and priorities, and take measures to remove all barriers to civil registration of vital events among all hard-to-reach populations and people in vulnerable situations, such as women and children, persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, internally displaced persons, domestic workers, foundlings and persons without documentation;
- ESCAP has developed material to support the implementation of quantitative inequality assessments using secondary data
- The Toolkit has been designed to support the inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers, and persons who are internally displaced, stateless or of undetermined nationality. The approaches can also be applied to other communities facing unequal access to civil registration. The toolkit may inform national endeavors to increase registration rates and to include marginalized population groups into existing national civil registration systems.^[6]

2.3 Production of vital statistics and development indicators

Action points

- Countries should ensure that vital statistics are produced from the civil registration data which needs to include all population groups to ensure that it is fully universal. Production of a vital statistics report is a key step in this regard.
- Disaggregated data allows for a better understanding of the specific needs and vulnerabilities of different groups within displaced and stateless populations, enabling more targeted interventions and policies.

Guidance/mandate

- **The Principles and Recommendations of a Vital Statistics System** (P&R) state:
 - (Para 358) The registration of a vital event can be by the place of occurrence or by the place of usual residence. Whichever norm is adopted, it is important that the civil registration law clearly states the place of registration for each type of event. The place of usual residence is the geographical location (or address) where the specified person usually resides. While there are usually no problems in determining the place of occurrence, there may be difficulties in determining the place of usual residence. For example (...) others may be seeking a residence (e.g. refugees). The treatment of all such cases should be clearly stated in the registration law and accompanied by clear implementing instructions to local civil registration authorities and other relevant government actors to ensure consistent implementation.
 - (Para 173-175) Data on citizenship should be collected so as to permit the characterization of the persons concerned as (a) citizens by birth, (b) persons who acquired citizenship after birth through naturalization, option, marriage, declaration, etc., and (c) foreigners. Information on the country of citizenship of foreigners should also be collected. It is important to record country of citizenship as such and not to use an adjective to indicate citizenship, since some of these adjectives are the same as those used to designate ethnic groups. For countries in which the population includes a significant proportion of naturalized citizens, the information distinguishing citizens by birth from citizens by naturalization would allow, for example, the study of possible differentials in fertility and mortality. Instructions should be given for the disposition to be made of (a) stateless persons, (b) persons with dual nationality, (c) persons in process of naturalization and (d) any other groups of ambiguous citizenship.
- Producing vital statistics is also a key commitment as part of the Regional Action Framework.
 - 3.A: By (national target year), annual nationally representative statistics on births – disaggregated by age of mother, sex of child, geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or other valid administrative data sources.
 - 3.B: By (national target year), annual nationally representative statistics on deaths – disaggregated by age, sex, cause of death defined by ICD (latest version as appropriate), geographic area and administrative subdivision – are produced from registration records or other valid administrative data sources.
 - 3.F: By (national target year), key summary tabulations of vital statistics on births and deaths using registration records as the primary source, are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within one calendar year.

- 3.G: By (national target year), key summary tabulations of vital statistics on causes of death using registration records as the primary source, are made available in the public domain in electronic format annually, and within two calendar years.
- 3.H: By (national target year), an accurate, complete and timely vital statistics report for the previous two years, using registration records as the primary source, is made available in the public domain.
- Technical support can be found in the [resource kit](#) to enable the production of vital statistics reports, primarily using civil registration data.
- It is important there is legislation in place to ensure that NSOs can collect the relevant statistics. A stable and transparent legal basis can guarantee the independence, integrity and accountability of statistical authorities according to the *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics*. Most countries but not all have a national statistics authority or NSO. Where there is no NSO the statistics law should define the mandates of the various statistical agencies. Where there is an NSO, it gains its power and authority from these laws. Statistics laws determine the basic principles and standards concerning the production and organization of official statistics; they are complemented by national legislation on data protection and privacy, as well as by relevant international legal principles and standards.
- Statistics laws regulate the organization, duties, and authority of statistical agencies and enable NSOs to compile and assess the quality of data and official statistics. Statistics law enables the production, publication and dissemination of statistics. The law should define the national coordinating role for all activities for developing, producing and disseminating official statistics. Statistics law covers and regulates the NSOs and all institutions and agencies that make up the official national statistical system. This is particularly important for refugee, IDP and statelessness statistics where a variety of national ministries, departments and agencies, including the country UNHCR office (in the case of refugees and stateless populations), could be involved in producing data on the topic (IRRS para 527; IRIS paras 318-319; and IROSS paras 324-325). Additionally, laws should include provisions for statistical agencies to access data from administrative records, where such provisions do not exist. It should be noted that such laws should not make provisions for statistical authorities to share individual record data with other authorities.
- The National Statistical System (NSS) should be mandated to produce refugee, IDP and statelessness statistics under relevant legislation, regulations, and quality standards, with designated entities coordinating development, production, and dissemination at national and local levels, while liaising with international organizations. Different agencies may handle various production aspects, and refugee, IDP and statelessness statistics should be included in National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) or other multi-annual plans to enhance their mainstreaming, quality, and availability. Integrating these statistics into regular publications and sectoral statistics, such as health and education, will pool resources and streamline data collection through existing systems. Furthermore, refugee, IDP and statelessness statistics should be part of national statistics coordination mechanisms or specific refugee, IDP and statelessness coordination mechanisms, if necessary, to meet UNFPOS and national/international quality standards, including contributions from both official statistics producers and relevant operational data providers (IRRS paras 541-543; IRIS paras 367-370; IROSS paras 322-323).

- Ensure the timely and accessible dissemination of refugee, IDP, and statelessness statistics to relevant stakeholders, including policymakers, researchers and the public. This may involve the development of dedicated statistical publications, online databases and data portals that provide comprehensive and up-to-date information on refugees, IDPs and stateless populations (IRRS paras 544-563; IRIS para 326; IROSS para 325). Given the sensitive nature of statistics on displaced and stateless populations, statistical offices should take steps to ensure correct use and understanding of the statistics, including engagement with and training of journalists and policymakers as required.
- Flexible arrangements and procedures will be required for vulnerable populations, such as geographically isolated communities that may have difficulty reaching civil registrars, stateless persons who may lack documentation or evidence proving their location of historical residence, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) who no longer live at their former place of habitual residence – to which it is generally not safe or viable for them to return. Additionally, forcibly displaced persons may also be subject to limitations on their freedom of movement, such as being confined to camps.
- Key measures to resolve these challenges include the establishment of mobile registration services that proactively reach isolated, forcibly displaced and vulnerable communities, coupled with policies and procedures allowing persons to register vital events and obtain civil status documentation (including the replacement of lost or destroyed documents) at any location where civil registration services are generally provided.⁶

2.4 Integration of displaced and stateless persons into national statistical systems

Action points

- Encourage countries to strengthen their civil registration systems to ensure that refugees, IDPs and stateless individuals are included in vital statistics databases. This may involve conducting awareness campaigns to inform refugees, IDPs and stateless populations about the importance of civil registration and the documentation required for registration. Governments should also simplify registration procedures to make them more accessible to refugees, remove any barriers in law, policy or practice, undertake dedicated measures such as mobile registration units in refugee camps and areas with high number of refugees, and permit the registration of vital events at any civil registration office that individuals are able to reach. Specific outreach to reach these populations groups might also be needed.
- Ensure data sources that are used in national statistical systems are inclusive of refugees, IDPs and stateless persons. This could involve integrating questions on displacement and statelessness status into population and housing census, household surveys and other data collection instruments. Additionally, countries should explore innovative approaches, such as utilizing mobile technology and geospatial mapping, to reach refugees, IDPs and stateless populations in remote or hard-to-reach areas and ensure their inclusion in vital statistics.
- Encourage countries to disaggregate their statistics by age and forced displacement and statelessness status. This will further ensure that data related to protection status and support needs is captured.

⁶ As required by Article 20(2), Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

- Encourage countries to learn from national and regional efforts to successfully raise the priority given to refugee, IDP and statelessness statistics in national statistical work programmes; this can be enhanced by advocacy from regional and international organizations.
- Work with EGRIS and IDAC to include questions on refugees, IDPs, stateless persons and children on the move in census questionnaires and other relevant data collection exercises.

Guidance/mandate

- Coverage: Vital events statistics often cover only the 'usually resident population,' potentially excluding some populations in scope. Therefore, it is important to ensure CRVS legislation aligns with universal principles to prevent exclusion. Access to documentation should be ensured for all to facilitate vital events registration and nationality entitlement (if relevant, note that civil registration on its own does not confer nationality). Efforts should be made to ensure refugees, IDPs and stateless persons have access to civil registration units, such as those confined to camps or residing in remote locations.
- Relevant law, policy and practice should afford all persons in the country full and equal rights to register all vital events, irrespective of their immigration status, nationality or statelessness, in line with the non-discrimination principle.⁷
- Strategies like mobile registration units can help overcome these barriers. Investing in resources to improve registration office capacity and reach, including facilitating registration in different languages could also help to strengthen coverage. Targeted information campaigns in relevant languages can address reluctance to notify authorities of vital events and incentivize registration independently from service provision. In particular, given the nature of statelessness, greater emphasis should be placed on ensuring stateless populations births are registered. Birth registration does not confer citizenship on a child but creates a permanent legal record of the child's name, age, parentage and place of birth. By providing evidence of these legally relevant facts, a birth registration record is often helpful in clarifying which citizenship a child possesses on the basis of its parentage and place of birth (IRRS paras 201-204; IRIS paras 257-260; IROSS paras 252-263). By serving as an official record the child's age, a birth certificate is also instrumental in ensuring that adolescents, who may be otherwise mistaken for and treated as adults, enjoy age-specific rights reserved for children under international law, such as protection from child labour, child marriage and child recruitment.
- Data sources: Identifying and utilizing appropriate data sources for refugee, IDP and statelessness statistics, including administrative records (such as CRVS), surveys, censuses and other relevant sources. This may involve integrating data from different sources to create comprehensive datasets on refugees, IDPs and stateless populations of interest (IRRS para 155; IRIS para 192; IROSS para 289-302). 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. The rules applied in defining these concepts should be tested and fully assessed for statistical data quality purposes. A common personal identification number (PIN) for individual refugees, IDPs and stateless persons must exist at national level to facilitate the exchange of information and avoid duplicates. This PIN should be included in all databases to be used for refugee, IDP and statelessness statistics (IRRS paras 211-212; IRIS paras 258-260).

⁷ As enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the national law and policy framework, as well the conduct of all public authorities and institutions, must adhere to the prohibition against discrimination "based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin". Similarly, Articles 2 and 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child establish that States must ensure birth registration for "each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status".

- Identification: To identify population categories within the statelessness statistical framework in administrative registers and databases, the inclusion of a field on nationality with 'stateless or without a recognized nationality status' and 'unknown nationality/citizenship status' in an expanded list of response options will be necessary (IROSS para 251-253). This addition may require changes to the legal framework which governs the registers (IROSS para 254-255). For data sources beyond civil registration and national ID, it should also always be considered whether singling out these populations will negatively impact their access to services. If this is the case, the modification would not be advisable.
- Harmonization: Statistical inclusion of refugees, IDPs and stateless persons in national statistical systems, as defined in the IRRS, IRIS and IROSS, refers to the coordination and harmonization of statistical data, methodologies, definitions and practices related to refugees, IDPs and stateless populations within the national statistical framework of a country (IRRS para 488, IRIS para 310 and IROSS para 9). The recommendations emphasize the importance of integrating refugee, IDP and statelessness statistics into national statistical systems to ensure comprehensive and accurate data collection, analysis and reporting. This integration enables countries to effectively monitor and evaluate the situation of refugees, IDPs and stateless persons, assess their needs and develop evidence-based policies and programs to support their integration and well-being.
- The **Integrated Data Ecosystem Assessment and Strengthening** (IDEAS) tool, jointly developed by UNICEF, IOM, UNHCR, UNSD and ESCAP, aims to comprehensively map existing data, identify gaps and good practices in national data capacities, and provide recommendations on how to sustainably enhance the collection, analysis and use of high-quality, timely and disaggregated data on children on the move at the country level, thereby ensuring well-informed responses to the needs of migrant and displaced children.
- Further, the IDAC brief **Data and Statistics for Children on the Move: Essential sources and good practices** describes the main processes involved in producing data and statistics on child populations on the move and explores the challenges of collecting child-sensitive data in today's migration and displacement context. It recommends strategic use of existing data to inform policymaking and programming and to identify investments needed to improve the availability of data on children on the move. The inclusion of migration-related topics and questions recommended by the 2017 Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Census and UNSD's Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses, respectively, can provide critical details about migrant children and their needs for governments.

2.5 Legal identity and inclusion in identity management systems

Action points

Countries should provide legal identity to everyone in the territory and jurisdiction, including refugees, IDPs and stateless populations. Barriers to obtaining a legal identity should be identified and removed where possible. In particular, the specific challenges of refugees, IDPs and stateless persons, as well as people from ethnic minorities, should be considered and resolved.

Where an identity management system is implemented, there should be linkages to the civil registration system as the foundational system. The United Nations Legal Identity Agenda refers to the holistic approach to civil registration of all vital events, production of vital statistics, the establishment and maintenance of population registers and identity management apparatus from birth to death

and that there should be full interoperability between these functions in a simultaneous manner, according to the national legislation and policies of each member State and international standards and recommendations.

Guidance/mandate

- **Handbook on CRVS and Identity Management systems:**

- Para 17: In the case of refugees, Member States are primarily responsible for issuing proof of legal identity. The issuance of proof of legal identity to refugees may also be administered by an internationally recognized and mandated authority.
- Para 25: Member States have the responsibility to recognize all individuals present on their territory as a person before the law, without prejudice to nationality (or lack thereof), legal status, gender or duration of stay, and, in the case of displaced persons whose official credentials may have been lost, destroyed or confiscated in the course of human conflict or natural disasters, honor the temporary credentials issued by an intergovernmental body such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), until such time as the legal identity of the individual is reaffirmed by either the country of origin or the country of refuge.
- The *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* reaffirms that everyone has the right to a legal identity, namely to 'recognition as a person before the law.' To give effect to this right in situations of internal displacement, Article 20 of the Guiding Principles calls on the authorities to ensure access to all documents necessary for the enjoyment and exercise of legal rights—particularly birth certificates, marriage certificates, passports and personal identification documents.
- The *Guiding Principles* reinforce note the importance of ensuring that women and men have equal rights to obtain documentation, and to have such documentation issued in their own names.
- Providing and replacing national passports for internally displaced persons is also important with respect to further securing their right to seek and enjoy asylum abroad, should this become necessary.
- Goal 2 of the RAF states: All individuals are provided with legal documentation of civil registration of births, deaths and other vital events, as necessary, to claim identity,⁸ civil status and ensuing rights. Specifically, it mentions:
 - (para 23) Legal documentation of civil registration is obtained through paper or electronic certificates or certified copies of registration records that prove the occurrence and characteristics of a vital event. Governments should specify the method of issuing legal documentation for the first time, for replacements and for corrections, and take necessary measures to eliminate discrimination, deter corruption, fraud and forgery, and protect the privacy of individuals and families.
 - (para 24) Achieving this goal requires that legal documentation should be readily accessible to the appropriate individuals. Aside from physical access, this includes no or low fees for providing the legal documentation and short waiting time between the civil registration of a vital event and the provision of the legal documentation.

⁸ It should be noted that possession of an identity is both a human right unto itself, as well as a practical foundation for the enjoyment of a broad range of other rights. See Articles 7, 8, Convention on the Rights of the Child.


2.6. Regional and international coordination

Action points

- Experience sharing between countries in subregions and regions should be strengthened, especially ensuring that vulnerable populations and those crossing international borders are not left out of CRVS systems. Under international law, the primary obligation to register all vital events, particularly births and marriages, lies with the State in whose territory the vital event takes place. Subsequently, for foreign nationals, it is advisable to also register or declare the event with the respective consulate or embassy. However, this may not be possible for stateless people (who will generally lack consular or diplomatic protection abroad), or for refugees, who may have a well-founded fear of approaching authorities from their home countries.
- International development partners and agencies should improve coordination to better support countries in improving CRVS systems to support displaced and stateless populations and avoid duplication of efforts.
- International and regional agencies should encourage the improvement of statistics for refugees, IDPs, stateless persons and children on the move by helping to clarify the advantages of establishing safe and reliable data management systems, and to build political consensus in support of these goals. This could include engaging with ministers and senior politicians to advocate for these populations to become a priority for national agendas.
- International and regional organizations should advocate for the use of internationally agreed statistical definitions (e.g. IRRS, IRIS and IROSS) and standards to ensure statistics on refugees, IDPs and stateless persons meet the needs of their users and are comparable over time and contexts.

Guidance/mandate

- The RAF states:
 - (Para 72) National civil registration authorities are central to successful implementation of the regional action framework, particularly realization of goals 1 and 2. Recognizing this important role, the regional partnership will, subject to the availability of resources, support the establishment and functioning of a regional network of civil registrars to facilitate information sharing and peer-to-peer technical support, as well as documenting and sharing knowledge and lessons learned.
- The IROSS explores the role of regional organizations in developing political consensus to address statelessness, including through the improved statistics on stateless populations that highlight the scope of the issue and the interventions most needed (para 357). For example, commitments to ensure compliance with relevant legal, policy and institutional frameworks for eradicating statelessness and commitments to strengthen data management systems to better include stateless persons. The Abidjan Declaration and associated Banjul Plan of Action of The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on the Eradication of Statelessness 2017-2024 presents an example of strong regional commitments that include improvements to data. The Regional Support Office of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, presents another example which, through its work on civil registration in particular, has resulted in concrete progress to assess the inclusion of stateless persons and those without a recognized nationality status (among others) in civil registration systems.



Furthermore, regional commitments such as the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Building a More Resilient Future with Inclusive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, which specifically calls for the inclusion of stateless persons in CRVS systems, can create momentum for further progress.

2.7 Increasing data availability

Action points


- Publish available CRVS, census, and survey data on refugees, IDPs and stateless persons to increase their visibility in policymaking processes and among politicians. This data should be published in alignment with the UNFPOS and should be available on a public platform.
- Conduct a pilot case study to identify refugees, IDPs, stateless persons and children on the move.
- Work with EGRIS and IDAC to include questions on refugees, IDPs, stateless persons and children on the move in census questionnaires.

Guidance

- Dissemination should be viewed as the link between data availability and the use of statistics for policymaking purposes. Dissemination of these statistics should adhere to several key principles, including those outlined in the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics: objectivity, impartiality, confidentiality, privacy, timeliness and accessibility. Users of this data should receive adequate support, and the dissemination platform should offer information in various formats. Using a single platform for disseminating all national refugee, IDP and statelessness statistics is essential. Additionally, efforts should be made to enhance the accessibility of the results by employing innovative visualization techniques to present statistical information in a user-friendly manner. Official statistics on refugees, IDPs and stateless persons should be produced and published by the NSO or by statistical units within government ministries, which are regulated by the national statistics law and relevant standards. Access to official statistics should be ensured for the widest range of users and all users should have access to statistical releases at the same time (IRRS paras 544-563).

The dissemination policy should include information about data access conditions, the range of publications and data available, the support that users can expect and the availability of metadata. Metadata should be available using non-proprietary software, and a contact person should be identified and publicized to support users. Where quality assessments have been carried out, quality statements should be publicly available as part of data releases and publications (IRIS para 327). As part of the public dissemination of refugee, IDP and statelessness statistics, governments should make these statistics, including metadata, available to the relevant international partners, but must also ensure that individual data collected about people and legal entities that are subject to national confidentiality rules are used exclusively for statistical purposes or for purposes mandated by legislation.

- In cases where national dissemination platforms do not exist, it is important that national authorities share data with UNHCR and other international actors to support their mandated efforts to compile global population statistics (IROSS para 339). UNHCR's Microdata Library (MDL) and the organization's Refugee Data Finder are examples of data sharing platforms for official statistics developed by UNHCR and showcase how international organizations can provide support in disseminating national data on refugees, IDPs and stateless persons. The purpose of



these tools is twofold: to support national partners in disseminating their data and statistics but also to strengthen the dissemination of statistics produced by UNHCR. The UNHCR Microdata Library is a repository managed by UNHCR and serves as a centralized platform for the storage, management and dissemination of microdata related to refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and stateless persons. This library includes various datasets collected through surveys, censuses and administrative records, providing valuable insights into the living conditions, demographics and socioeconomic status of displaced populations. Data from national statistical partners is an integral part of the MDL. The UNHCR Refugee Data Finder is an online tool that provides easy access to statistical data on forcibly displaced populations. This includes refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, stateless persons and others of concern to the UNHCR. The tool is designed to help researchers, policymakers (at all levels), humanitarian workers and the public understand the scope and dynamics of displacement globally.

2.8 Resource mobilization and Sustainable funding

Action points

- Promote effective inclusion of CRVS strengthening within key funding plans, including Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), Refugee Response Plans (RRPs) and UN Sustainable Development and Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs).
- To advocate among politicians and policymakers for increased and sustained domestic funding for CRVS activities with the goal of achieving universal coverage.
- Identify opportunities among donors and development partners to provide financial support to enable the inclusion of refugee, IDP, stateless persons and children on the move.
- In alignment with the Regional Action Framework, embed CRVS improvement into national development plans.

2.9 Data protection and privacy

Guidance

- Data confidentiality should be preserved by ensuring that the risk of direct or indirect identification of individuals or disclosure is managed by agreed rules, such as de-identification (modifying data by removing any identifiers) or anonymization (removing or altering information or collapsing detail to ensure that no person or organization is likely to be identified in the data). However, the applicability of these confidentiality rules can differ from one source to the next and are generally specific to each individual or organizational source. In addition to the rules, related parties may also benefit from other methods which preserve confidentiality, such as data reduction (the method that maintains the confidentiality of respondents by selecting appropriate aggregations or in manner of presentation of data) or by data modification methods (the method that maintain respondent confidentiality by altering the identifiable data in a small way without affecting aggregate results in a significant way) (IRRS paras 565-569).
- Strengthening existing legal instruments, including countries' statistics laws and census laws, in respect of confidentiality and privacy is essential. Laws supporting data collection about refugees and the release of information on refugees should be in place to: (a) promote public confidence

in the arrangements – and to publicize that there are legal constraints that determine what can and cannot be done; (b) ensure mutual understanding between NSOs, ministries and researchers; (c) provide consistency in the way data and research proposals are treated; and (d) establish a basis for dealing with breaches in the law (IRRS para 569).

- The joint UNICEF-UNHCR guidance note on [Responsible Disaggregation of Data on Refugee Children](#) notes that the collection of data about and for refugee and other forcibly displaced children must be based on a defined purpose and in accordance with responsible data principles in protection and humanitarian settings. It also recommends that national statistical offices, or any other government office or humanitarian organization that collects and analyses personal or non-personal information, must develop data systems under high ethical standards that can enable compliance with existing policies and standards for responsible data collection, storage, analysis and dissemination. This guidance note further delineates practical resources and tools to identify data disaggregation needs and presents recommendations to responsibly improve the quality of the data.
 - This is further elaborated in the IDAC Manual: 'It is crucial to recognize that if not used properly, disaggregated data can contribute to the reinforcement of harmful narratives and pose additional risks to children on the move. Therefore, when collecting and processing personal data on migrant and refugee children, it is essential to establish clear expectations regarding the competency, integrity and governance structures of national data collection systems. This ensures that the pursuit of disaggregation is not only feasible but also safe and protective for the children involved' (page 47).
- The [Responsible Data for Children](#) principles, a joint initiative by UNICEF and The GovLab, emphasizes preventing harm across the data life cycle by establishing end-to-end data responsibility. This involves assessing risks during the collection, storage, preparation, sharing, analysis and use stages of the data life cycle. Additionally, it promotes operationalizing responsible data practices and principles by establishing institutional processes, roles and responsibilities, always recognizing the distinct rights and requirements for helping children develop to their full potential.
- *2021 Ministerial Declaration* acknowledges that the digitization of data and other technological developments, including in biometrics, further necessitates the protection of personal data and the rights of the individual to privacy and consent with due respect to confidentiality, including regarding issues on how data are processed, managed and accessed by both public and private bodies.
- UNHCR aims to align its policies with the best international standards, such as the [UN Personal Data Protection and Privacy Principles](#), to ensure clear, transparent and predictable collaborations with partners and sister agencies. UNHCR's general policy on personal data protection and privacy (GDPP) includes the following recommendations, primarily for internal purposes, but is also applicable to other organizations working on data and privacy.
- Organizations dealing with data protection and privacy must adhere to stringent standards that encompass principles, data subject rights, operational procedures and complaint-handling mechanisms. These standards are essential for all data processing activities and can be adapted to include stricter measures when necessary.
- Data must be processed non-discriminatorily, respecting age, gender and diversity, and always upholding the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals, especially the right to privacy. Legitimate bases for data processing include consent, contractual necessity, protection of vital interests, legal claims, organizational mandates, public international law, or overriding legitimate interests.

- Processing must align with specific purposes like archiving, research, accountability and long-term assistance. Data obtained for specific purposes, such as planning or improving service delivery, should not be used for incompatible purposes, such as the imposition of punitive measures. Organizations are required to minimize data collection, retain data only as long as necessary, and ensure its accuracy and confidentiality.
- Adequate security measures and transparency are crucial, informing data subjects about processing activities, retention periods, and their rights, which include access, rectification, deletion and objection. This framework is particularly pertinent for children on the move, refugees, stateless and other vulnerable individuals who often face unique vulnerabilities. Ensuring their data is protected with the utmost care, maintaining confidentiality and providing clear communication about their rights can help safeguard their personal information and support their quest for identity and legal recognition.

Action points

- Strengthening regulations and standardizing protocols for data sharing between line ministries and government agencies while ensuring the protection and privacy of data.
- Bring together all relevant government stakeholders to discuss, deliberate and develop shared understanding of the challenges, opportunities and modalities for data sharing.
- Explore the feasibility of signing data sharing agreements with development partners, particularly UNHCR, for the production of statistics.

Guidance

Data sharing impact analysis

- <https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/capacity-development/admin-data/>
- IRRS states that data sharing is essential to the production of refugee statistics, particularly where administrative data is the source. However, a major concern with respect to any sharing of refugee and asylum seeker data is their extreme sensitivity, as well as the consequences that can arise from the improper handling of data for this particularly vulnerable group. The sharing or disclosure of data on asylum seekers and refugees should not jeopardize the safety or lead to a violation of the human rights of the individuals concerned, their family members and associates. Additionally, asylum seekers should not suffer the loss of state protection through prejudicial disclosure of data. Therefore, statisticians should take appropriate measures to prevent data of individuals from being published or otherwise released in a form that would allow any subject's identity to be disclosed or inferred. In particular, the level of anonymity should be as high as possible while still allowing required disaggregated statistics to be produced using the appropriate level of statistical disclosure control.
- 'Privacy' is an established human right under international law.⁹ The UN Handbook on CRVS Systems emphasizes that personal data must "be used only for the purposes prescribed by law" (para 484), whilst the Human Rights Committee has further clarified that all laws relevant to privacy must conform with key human rights standards.¹⁰ Moreover, the collection and analyses

9 See generally, Article 17, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

10 See paras 3, 4, CCPR General Comment No. 16: Article 17 (Right to Privacy), The Right to Respect of Privacy, Family, Home and Correspondence, and Protection of Honour and Reputation, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/legal/general/hrc/1988/en/27539>

of data must be done with a view to safeguarding human rights.¹¹ In the context of CRVS systems, privacy can be described as a data subject's right to decide what information is made available, when it is to be released and to whom it is released.¹² Data 'confidentiality', on the other hand, is a property of data, usually resulting from legislative measures, which prevents it from unauthorized or unnecessary disclosure. Confidentiality is maintained when personal data is shared only for purposes compatible with those for which it was originally collected, and with individuals or entities who need to know such information to perform functions that are consistent with such purposes. Ensuring confidentiality is the appropriate response for a statistical agency when it obtains private or personal data (United Nations, 2003). These two terms complement each other, since a breach of data confidentiality can result in an intrusion on the rights of privacy of the data subject.

- In order to ensure that these two concepts of privacy and confidentiality are properly practiced in statistical production and dissemination, there are certain principles and guidelines that should be observed, including:
 - Principle 6 of the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, which states that 'Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.'¹³
 - Clauses 4.5 and 4.6 of the International Statistical Institute's Declaration on Professional Ethics, which require statisticians to keep identities and records confidential, whether or not confidentiality has been explicitly pledged, and to take appropriate measures to prevent the disclosure or inference of identities.¹⁴
 - Principle 5 of The European Statistics Code of Practice adopted by the Statistical Programme Committee states that 'The privacy of data providers, and the confidentiality of the information they provide and its use only for statistical purposes and the security of the data are absolutely guaranteed.'¹⁵
- When sharing personal data, UNHCR adheres to several key principles in strict compliance with its **General Policy on Personal Data Protection and Privacy (GDPP)**.

2.10 Capacity building

Action points

- Organize capacity-building workshops and training sessions for staff members of national statistical agencies and relevant government departments. These workshops should focus on enhancing their understanding on the need for inclusion and the specific challenges faced by refugees, IDPs, stateless populations children on the move and , as well as providing training on standardized data collection methodologies and tools that are safe, appropriate and in line with established data


11 Handbook on civil registration, vital statistics and identity management systems, at para 10, available at: https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesF/Seriesf_121e.pdf

12 United Nations, Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System (2014), available at: https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Principles_and_Recommendations/CRVS/M19Rev3-E.pdf"https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Principles_and_Recommendations/CRVS/M19Rev3-E.pdf

13 United Nations, Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (2014), available at: https://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/hb/E-fundamental%20principles_A4-WEB.pdf

14 International Statistical Institute, Declaration on Professional Ethics (1985), available at: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/docViewer.aspx?docID=93#start>

15 European Statistics Code of Practice (2017), available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/4031688/8971242/KS-02-18-142-EN-N.pdf/e7f85f07-91db-4312-8118-f729c75878c7?t=1528447068000>



protection standards. By equipping staff with the necessary skills and knowledge, countries can improve the quality and reliability of statistical data related to refugees, IDPs, stateless individuals and children on the move. These capacity-building initiatives are supported by tools produced by international partners such as:

- EGRISS' e-learning course – this course was developed to present the IRRS, IRIS and IROSS in a more accessible format. The facilitated course is accompanied by a series of webinars, which serve as an opportunity for participants to ask questions and share their experiences concerning the implementation of the IRRS, IRIS and IROSS. The self-paced version of the course enables learners to access the relevant material throughout the year.
- Recommendation at-a-glance guidance – these documents were designed for senior managers from National Statistical Offices, other Government institutions, as well as regional and international organizations. They aim to encourage the further utilization of the Recommendation and introduce complementary EGRISS resources to facilitate efforts to pursue statistical inclusion of refugees, IDPs and stateless persons. The Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) has developed a complementary document to make the IRIS more accessible and actionable for stakeholders, especially at the national level.
- Targeted technical support: While technical support is valuable, it should be targeted to address specific contexts and populations. Not all initiatives are relevant in every context, emphasizing the importance of tailored approaches.
- Create opportunities for more peer-to-peer learning among countries in the region of best practices, innovative solutions and challenges to inclusion of the above-mentioned population groups.
- Regional sensitization and training: There is a clear need for more comprehensive sensitization and training on statistical frameworks and guidance presented in the workshop. Many stakeholders lack a thorough understanding of these frameworks and the populations they include, hindering their ability to effectively contribute to data collection and analysis efforts.
- Integrating initiatives for cohesive implementation: Clear communication and focused collaboration are essential to link various capacity-building initiatives and data sources presented in the workshops, ensuring holistic and efficient implementation at the country level within the broader migration statistics landscape, and avoiding fragmentation and duplication of efforts.

Guidance

- The IDAC [**Manual on Child-Specific Data Capacity-Strengthening on Children on the Move**](#), developed in partnership with the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT), provides analytical guidance to national statistical authorities and relevant actors on how to acquire or enhance the appropriate capacity to collect data on migrant and displaced children. It recommends mapping out and linking up initiatives working on migration, forced displacement and 2030 Agenda statistics, and connecting them with initiatives working on capacity building and integration into national statistical systems and plans. Joint capacity-building workshops and training with partners leading in these areas at national, regional and global levels are also recommended to avoid duplication of efforts. The manual addresses special considerations to be given when collecting statistics on children in general and forced displaced children more specifically. For example, on page 64: 'National authorities should form technical governance bodies to strengthen statistics on children on the move, such as advisory groups, working groups, expert groups and common collaborative spaces to harmonize concepts, definitions, methodology and reporting on data collected.'

- The IDEAS project, for example, aims to map out the data ecosystem related to child-specific data and identify gaps and capacity needs'. A central challenge related to statistics on refugee and migrant children is further addressed in the manual on page 57: 'An important issue regarding legal constraints in the collection and use of data on migrant and refugee children is the lack of uniformity in legal definitions. Whilst the definition of a 'child,' a "migrant person' or a 'refugee' may vary across different national legislations, it is important to follow definitions for key terms, such as 'child' and "refugee" that meet (or exceed) the standard of protection and inclusion found within the established definitions in international law, notably including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.
- The lack of coherent and consistent definitions of key terms and concepts not only creates problems of comparability as the collected data are not of a similar nature and thus rendered insufficient as inputs for statistical information, but also potentially creates problems with the protection of children's rights.' Capacity building and understanding around common terminology and definitions is therefore essential. This is further addressed in the IDAC terminology brief.
- Given the range of actors involved in the production of statelessness statistics, capacity needs may vary. Capacity-building initiatives should employ a whole-of-data ecosystem approach, ensuring that the diversity of actors involved in the development of these statistics are able to strengthen their statistical capacity on statelessness (IROSS paras 364-366; 370-371).
- A national statistical coordinator familiar with operational activities within NSOs should work to champion the capacity development agenda at the national level. The terms of this position should be determined by NSOs. National statistical coordinators should collaborate with other national counterparts and establish a regional hub, where they can set up capacity development networks, exchange knowledge and develop mechanisms to report on efforts and coordinate stateless-related statistical capacity development initiatives at the regional level (IROSS para 369).
- In contexts where forced displacement is an issue, the inclusion of refugee, IDP and statelessness statistics into the NSDS or similar plan (such as the annual statistical programme) can help mainstream the production of official refugee, IDP and statelessness statistics and improve their quality and availability through resourcing and capacity building, even when the primary focal point for data production is not yet part of the NSS (IRRS para 541 & 609; IRIS para 313 & 372; IROSS para 322).

2.11 Community engagement, outreach and awareness

Action points

- Organize a national-level campaign to bring attention to the large gaps in CRVS data and their implications on the human rights of refugees, IDPs, stateless persons and children on the move.
- Engage with diplomatic missions to organize consular meetings on birth registration and confirmation of nationality of persons.
- Organize townhall-style meetings to sensitize and create awareness among communities to register undocumented children born in a foreign country.



Guidance

- UNHCR recognizes the pivotal role that Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play in addressing statelessness and ensuring the protection and rights of stateless persons. As part of its comprehensive approach to combating statelessness, UNHCR provides specific guidance such as *The Global Action Plan to End Statelessness* (2014-2024) and the 'Strategic plan 2023-2026: Redoubling Our Efforts on Ending Statelessness' on the inclusion of CSOs in its efforts.
- This guidance underscores the importance of collaboration and partnership with CSOs, leveraging their on-the-ground expertise, community reach, and advocacy capabilities. CSOs are essential in identifying and documenting cases of statelessness, raising awareness about the plight of stateless individuals, and advocating for legislative and policy reforms.
- UNHCR encourages active engagement with CSOs in designing and implementing programs that aim to prevent and reduce statelessness, protect the rights of stateless individuals, and find durable solutions. This includes involving CSOs in policy dialogues, capacity-building initiatives, and monitoring and evaluation processes. By fostering strong partnerships with CSOs, UNHCR aims to create a more inclusive and effective response to statelessness, ensuring that the voices of affected communities are heard, and their needs are adequately addressed.

2.12 Strengthening legal frameworks and legal review

Action points

- Removing barriers in law, policy or practice that disqualify or penalize persons attempting to register vital events because they lack lawful residency status or identity documentation.
- Establishing dedicated procedures to overcome common challenges such as late birth registration, birth registration for children born to parents who are unmarried or do not have a marriage certificate, and the registration of out-of-hospital births.
- Ensuring that persons can obtain or replace civil status documentation at any location where civil registration services are provided, rather than requiring individuals to return to their prior domicile or place of habitual residence.
- Harmonizing and streamlining the legal framework related to registration of births, deaths, marriage and divorce managed by various departments and line ministries, including between the federal, state and local levels, as applicable.
- Clarify the legal and statistical definitions of refugees, IDPs, stateless persons and children on the move, if not already done so.
- Introducing changes to legislation if needed with respect to mandatory notification of death to the local civil registry office and preparation of death certificates prior to the burial.
- Consult with all relevant line ministries, departments and agencies responsible for the aforementioned population groups to identify data needs, challenges and opportunities.
- Principles and Recommendations (P&R): Details of how to handle civil registration of target populations should be clearly stated in the registration law. For example, where the registration of vital event includes the place of usual residence, it needs to be clear how this might apply to displaced people.

Guidance

- Legal basis: Establishing a legal framework that supports the collection, analysis and dissemination of refugee, IDP and statelessness statistics within the national statistical system. This may involve enacting laws or regulations that mandate the inclusion of statistics on EGRIS populations of interest as a specific area of statistical work (IRRS para 406; IRIS para 32; IROSS para 245).
- Countries should consider implementing a legal review of civil registration systems to identify any required changes to the legal framework to ensure it supports a fully inclusive CRVS system.



3 ANNEX

Asylum seekers: A general term for any person who is seeking international protection. In some countries, it is used as a legal term referring to a person who has applied for refugee status or a complementary international protection status and has not yet received a final decision on their claim. It can also refer to a person who has not yet submitted an application but may intend to do so or may be in need of international protection. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee is initially an asylum seeker. It is important to note that the obligation of non-refoulement applies equally to asylum seekers. Accordingly, an asylum seeker may not be sent back to their country of origin until their asylum claim has been examined in a fair procedure and is entitled to certain minimum standards of treatment pending determination of their status. It is critical to reinforce that the right to protection against non-refoulement applies equally to asylum seekers as to individuals formally determined to be in need of international protection as a refugee.

Refugees: Any person who meets the eligibility criteria under an applicable refugee definition, as provided for in international or regional refugee instruments, under UNHCR's mandate, or in national legislation. Under international law, a person is considered a refugee as soon as they meet the relevant criteria, whether or not they have been formally recognized as a refugee. A person does not become a refugee because of recognition, but rather is recognized because they are a refugee. Palestine Refugees registered with UNRWA and other persons eligible to receive UNRWA services without being registered are also covered under this category. It may be important, however, to distinguish refugees recognized under different conventions and covered by different entities for data compilation. This will depend on the needs of national statistical users.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): 'Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have remained living in the country's internationally recognized border'. (*Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* (1998/2004)).

For statistical purposes, an IDP is distinguished from economic/voluntary migrants in that their movement is coerced or involuntary, and refugees by remaining within internationally recognized state borders.

Forcibly displaced: This term is used throughout the document and refers to refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced populations.

Stateless: The international legal definition for a stateless person is found in the 1954 Convention: 'a person who is not considered a national by any State under the operation of its law'.

Children on the move: A compound concept that has gained traction on the operational level in the international community. The term describes children who have been directly or indirectly affected by migration and displacement, either internationally across borders or within the same country. When referring to children on the move, IDAC includes: child migrants; children in need of international protection, such as refugees and asylum seekers; internally displaced children; children indirectly affected by migration and displacement, such as children who stay behind while parents or caregivers migrate; stateless children and child victims of cross-border trafficking.

For more information, please visit:

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