



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
7 December 2015

Original: English

Commission on Population and Development

Forty-ninth session

11-15 April 2016

Item 4 of the provisional agenda¹

**General debate on national experience in population matters:
“Strengthening the demographic evidence base for the post-2015
Development agenda”**

Statement submitted by International Presentation Association, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council²

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

¹ E/CN.9/2016/1.

² The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Strengthening the demographic evidence base for the post-2015 development agenda for a better understanding of international migration

International Presentation Association (IPA) is an NGO accredited with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at the United Nations since 2000. We work in 23 countries. We believe that in order to properly and effectively address the issues of migration and human trafficking in the current context, it has become necessary to strengthen the international community's focus on, and methodology regarding, the use of statistics and collection of data.

IPA concurs with the General Assembly's 2013 Declaration on International Migration and Development that the issue of contemporary human mobility is a key factor for sustainable development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We further concur with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in acknowledging the right of contemporary human mobility. It is our shared responsibility, as human beings, to formulate strategy and policies which ensure the safe migration and mobility of people, the protection of human rights of migrants, in particular those of women and children. In addition we must address the root causes of the criminal phenomena of migrant smuggling and trafficking.

The Secretary-General recognizes that international migration is a multidimensional reality of major relevance for those displaced, as well as for the development of countries of origin, transit and destination, which must be addressed in a coherent, comprehensive and balanced manner, with regard for social, economic and environmental dimensions and with a respect for human rights. We agree with the United Nations' concept paper on "Strengthening Cooperation on Migration and Refugee Movements" (9/30/15) that long-term strategies, commitments and action across a wide range of policy areas are required in order to achieve the goal of sustainable development vis-à-vis migration and human trafficking.

The events which continue to unfold in various parts of the world demonstrate that the issues of migration and human trafficking are a grave moral concern to every country. So far in 2015, more than 500,000 Middle Eastern and African refugees fleeing poverty and war have crossed the Mediterranean into Europe. Since 2012, an estimated 150,000 refugees fleeing persecution in Myanmar-mostly Rohingya Muslims-have been trafficked by sea to refugee camps in Thailand and Malaysia. Over 100,000 unaccompanied children from Central America and Mexico, fleeing poverty and violence, have been apprehended at the U.S.-Mexico border since late 2013. These statistics underscore the need for enhanced cooperation among all countries in order to achieve the creation of channels for orderly, safe and regular migration, humanitarian admission of refugees, and an improvement of cooperation between all entities aimed at combating human trafficking.

As the General Assembly recognized in resolution 69/229 of 19 December 2014, a better understanding of migration patterns across and within regions is necessary. Currently, the primary sources for data on migration flows are the population census, population registers, representative household surveys, and information from administrative governmental entities concerned with movement across borders. There must be international cooperation to develop the best possible

methods of tracking migration patterns. The United Nations has taken a proactive approach to developing improved methods of compiling data. Regional workshops, such as the one organized by the Population Division and the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), held in Dakar, Senegal in September 2015, for the purpose of strengthening the technical capacity of government officials in producing and analysing migration data from all relevant sources with an emphasis and focus on migration must not only be encouraged, but should become regular events involving the entire global community. We believe that in light of the current crisis, every country must immediately be included in a focused effort to collect, report, and share data. Every effort must be made to provide electronic methods of compiling and disseminating data, and the United Nations must continue to act as the international leader in this regard.

Data collection is made more difficult in light of the fact that refugees and migrants are averse to being counted, fearing that registration will impede their journey. Sometimes, migrants destroy their papers to disguise their nationality. In this regard, we believe that in addition to official data collection methods, the international community must focus on developing data gathering systems, in which the reporter is guaranteed anonymity. To the extent that ministries intentionally misrepresent data in order to obtain a politically advantageous result, it is important to set up a system of monitoring in collaboration with civil society to ensure accuracy and integrity of reporting.

The international community must acknowledge and address the special circumstances and dangers faced by women and children. Images of the bodies of young children washed onto the shores of Greek islands disseminated by the media are an international call to action to the global community to develop a strategy to protect the weakest and most vulnerable refugees. A great number of unaccompanied minors have crossed the border between Mexico and the United States. There must be cooperation between all countries, including countries of origin, destination, and transit, to destroy trafficking networks which place migrants, especially children, in danger. IPA is concerned that children in detention are frequently exposed to adverse conditions and human rights violations which will threaten their physical, emotional and psychological well-being. For this reason, IPA calls upon countries of origin, transit and destination to formally recognize and adopt the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Protocols. IPA believes that the rights of a child in detention include the right to education, and we encourage the United Nations to work towards ensuring that this need is addressed. The separation of families by deportation of one or more parents must also be addressed.

A more in-depth understanding of the various potential factors contributing to and/or underlying the departure of migrants from their country of origin is crucial. We express great concern about the impact of war, drug trafficking, gangs, financial/economic crises and natural disasters on international migration. We are particularly cognizant of the role that environmental factors play. Rethinking the approach to a greater understanding of the migrant issue in light of the post-2015 development agenda urgently requires a focus on what factors were responsible for creating the conditions which forced a person to flee their home in the first place. The international community must be encouraged to enter into an ongoing public dialogue regarding the how and why behind forced migration. The United Nations is

in the best position to facilitate this discourse, and should host local, regional and international forums where members of the international community can work towards a deeper understanding and a better policy for the future.

IPA also believes, and agrees with the United Nations as articulated in General Assembly resolution 69/229 that a focus on the contributions of migrants to development in countries of destination will facilitate the design of “evidenced-based policymaking and decision-making in all relevant aspects of sustainable development”. There is a perception that migrants have a negative impact, and we must educate the world that in addition to challenges, migration brings many benefits to the global community.

In light of the above, we recommend the following:

- International collaboration on improved methods of data collection and sharing of information on migration with the United Nations taking a lead role in the training and capacity building of member States;
- Development of an anonymous, electronically accessible reporting system so that persons in flight and in hiding can provide valuable information via cell phone and internet;
- Guarantee safe and appropriate environment for refugee children including quality education;
- Regular monitoring by United Nations observers of all detention centers and communities housing refugee children to ensure that educational and cultural needs of children in detention are being met;
- Education of people in general on the many contributions migrants can make to local communities and host countries, by disseminating articles and stories (via all available channels including media, internet, leaflets, church bulletins) about the many benefits which migrants bring to the global community; and
- Engagement of civil society organizations as active partners in the integration of migrants in the local communities, in data collection and in monitoring.