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Item 4(e) of the provisional agenda: International migration statistics

I would like to make a brief statement on behalf of the Global Migration Group under item 4(e) of the provisional agenda.

The Global Migration Group, or GMG, is an inter-agency group, bringing together 15 entities of the United Nations system and the International Organization for Migration, to promote the wider application of all relevant international and regional instruments and norms relating to migration, and to encourage the adoption of more coherent, comprehensive and better coordinated approaches to the issue of international migration.¹

The GMG welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on international migration statistics E/CN.3/2014/20 and concurs with its recommendations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The issue of international migration, and its impact on global development, has moved to the forefront of the global policy debate. Less than five months ago, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, a historic step in the consideration of migration at the United Nations.

Now, there is a groundswell of support to integrate migration in the implementation framework of the post-2015 UN development agenda as reflected in the 19 focus areas, presented by the Open working Group just a few weeks ago.

Both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have requested the Secretary-General to improve the availability, quality and comparability of migration data, to disaggregate migration data by age, sex and other characteristics, to strengthen statistical capacities, to promote cooperation among stakeholders, and to develop indicators to assess

¹ The GMG includes the following members: International Labour Office (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), United Nations Institute for Training & Research (UNITAR), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Regional Commissions, the World Bank, and World Health Organization (WHO).

the contribution of migrants to development. Obtaining accurate data on the situation of vulnerable migrants, including migrants in an irregular status, smuggled migrants, migrant women and children, older migrants, migrants with disabilities, and migrant victims of human trafficking, is of particular importance. The 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, held in October 2013, has also called for further work on labour migration statistics to inform labour market and migration policy.

As the report of the Secretary-General observes, although in the 2000 round of censuses three out of every four countries that asked a question on country of birth or citizenship provided that information to the Statistics Division, for the 2010 census round, the number of countries reporting such information fell below 50 per cent by December 2013. This is a worrying trend, considering that the census remains the most important source for comparable migration data, especially in developing countries.

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

As part of our respective work programmes, GMG entities produce data and indicators relevant for migration, migrants and development. While progress has been made, we are convinced that, given the scale of mobility, the contribution of migration to global development, and the need for objective migration evidence to inform public debate and debunk migration myths, a target response of the global statistical community is required.

Business-as-usual is no longer an option.

The report of the Secretary-General calls for a dedicated, global initiative to improve the collection, processing and analysis of migration data to support evidence-based policymaking. Such an effort should focus on all data sources, that is, population censuses, administrative sources, and surveys. This is a very welcome recommendation and the only way to address the large gap in migration evidence.

Such initiative should build on relevant UN standards, recommendations and guidelines, collaboration between data users and producers, and the exchange of migration data between countries, respecting confidentiality rules.

In addressing last Friday's panel "Managing the Data Revolution", Assistant-Secretary-General Thomas Gass observed that, and I quote, "*statisticians must move from being the bankers and the curators of data to be the promoters of the use of data connecting data with policy*". Migration is the perfect example.

The Global Migration Group stands ready to work with interested Governments and potential funders to develop a dedicated capacity building initiative to improve the collection and use of migration data.

Thank you.