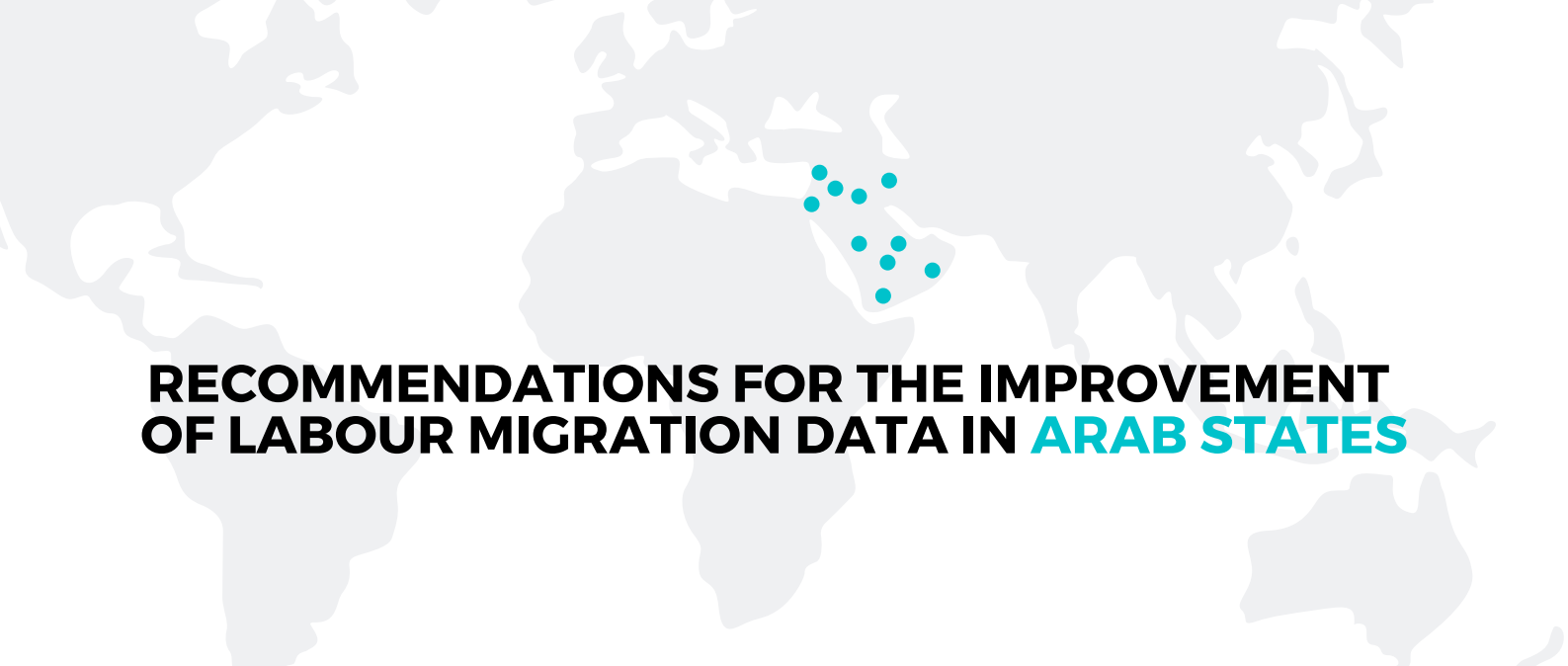




# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF LABOUR MIGRATION DATA IN **ARAB STATES**

## RECOMMENDATIONS COMMON TO ALL ARAB STATES

### DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

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- National institutions in charge of data collection should systematically adopt the definitions in the domains of migration and labour as established by United Nations and ICLS standards.
  - NSOs should use UNDESA's and ILO's suggested modules on migration statistics in survey questionnaires.<sup>1</sup>
  - NSOs should be given access to data generated by other agencies.
  - NSOs and public administrations should generalize the use of the variable "country of birth" in survey questionnaires and administrative records to identify immigrants.
  - In addition to country of birth, country of citizenship is a key variable that NSOs and public administrations should keep in all domains in which citizenship is relevant.
  - NSOs and public administrations should record returning citizens and return migration within a given time period,<sup>2</sup> with related variables including the previous country where a person lived for 6 or 12 months or longer,<sup>3</sup> duration of stay in previous country of usual residence, purpose of stay abroad, and date of return.
  - In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and in anticipation of future health crises, filling the knowledge gap regarding migration-related health inequalities in the Arab region is a necessity. Are migrants



more, or less, vulnerable than non-migrants in terms of exposure to, and severity of disease? Addressing this question requires that morbidity and mortality statistics be collected by country of birth and/or citizenship, as well as, more generally, access to health services, health insurance coverage, selected employment characteristics, and so on.

<sup>1</sup> ILO, 2018, “*Guidelines Concerning Statistics of International Labour Migration*”; UNDESA 2020, *Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses*, ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/115, <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Handbooks/international-migration/2020-Handbook-Migration-and-Censuses-E.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> ICLS guidelines state: “It is recommended that the reference period for the date of return, i.e. the maximum time elapsed since the return of the person to the country of current residence for them to be included in the count (stock) of return international migrant workers in that country, should be relatively long, such as last 12 months or last 5 years, or it may be left open and then classified by date of return” (p. 9).

<sup>3</sup> See ICLS guidelines: “It is recommended that the chosen minimum duration of labour attachment abroad for a person to be considered as a return international migrant worker be relatively short, such as 6 months, calculated on a cumulative basis for workers with repeated spells of migration” (p. 9).

## DATA DISSEMINATION AND USE

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- States should optimize the data they collect and fill the gap between data collection and data publication. For this, they should increase the quantity and quality of published data (publish more of the variables, with more cross-tabulations between variables). In particular, they should cross-tabulate variables related to migration with work-related variables by sex, age and education level. Thematic reports on international labour migration from censuses and surveys should be published.
  - States should publish vital records with a distinction between natives and foreign-born individuals, as well as between citizens and foreign citizens, so that mortality (especially the number of occupational accidents and injuries among migrant workers) and fertility of migrants can be estimated.

- Mechanisms should be developed to enhance collaboration between agencies/institutions that produce data and those that develop and implement migration policies. Such collaboration could be facilitated and encouraged by international agencies, such as the ILO, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and others that have a presence in most of the countries covered in this report. Specific joint seminars and training sessions to strengthen the skills of data producers and users could be organized, and dialogue to encourage collaboration could be instituted. Such initiatives could, perhaps, be extended to regional cooperation processes on migration, such as the Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, which aim to bring origin and destination countries together.
- Using universally standard definitions for collecting data, Arab states should exchange statistics on labour migration so that origin countries can maintain emigration statistics. This applies particularly to population censuses, which comprehensively cover all individuals in the population, including those belonging to less-represented countries of origin.

## RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO MIGRANT WORKERS' DESTINATION COUNTRIES

### DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

- Beyond data used to estimate the size and distribution of migrant worker populations, states should mandate administrations to produce data for the purpose of assessing migrants' and their family members' working and living conditions, including:



**Access to housing**



**Access to health**



**Access to education/training**



**Wages**



**Hours worked**



**Occupational accidents and injuries<sup>4</sup>**



**Social security benefits**



**Remittances**

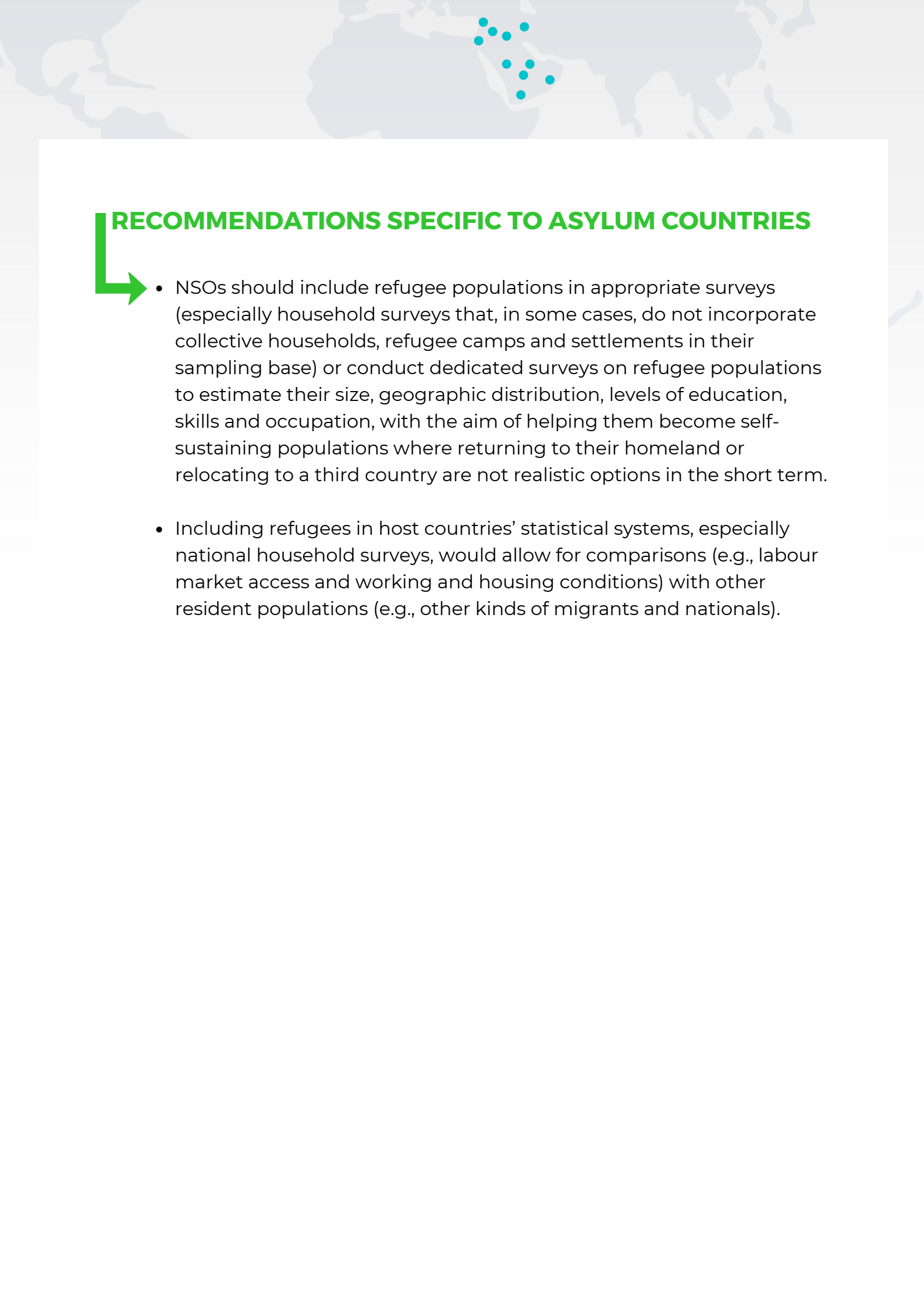
<sup>4</sup> Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 8.8.1 already recommends reporting such data (fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 workers, by sex and migrant status). See <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/?Text=&Goal=8&Target=8.8>

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- In collecting data on country of birth and country of citizenship, NSOs and public administrations should record the full name of the country instead of dichotomies such as native versus foreign-born or national versus foreign national. Ideally, all countries should be listed.
  - NSOs should design tools to evaluate the size and characteristics of categories that are missing in official statistics, such as migrant workers in irregular status, migrants employed in the informal sector, migrant domestic workers, return migrant workers, and so on.
  - The collection and compilation of statistics on migrant workers living in group quarters should be more fully integrated into national statistical systems to ensure this population is adequately covered.
  - States should develop the statistical treatment and use of administrative records for the purpose of building statistical knowledge on the population, including issues related to labour migration, in close collaboration with the NSO of the country. For this, they should:
    1. Systematize the use of a national individual identifier to merge data from different administrative sources;
    2. Instruct public administrations to collect individual information that includes country of birth, country of citizenship, duration of stay and purpose of migration;
    3. Provide data in real time, with an aim to monitor changes.
  - States should maintain the use of traditional statistical operations, such as population censuses, LFS and other household surveys. In particular, they should not give up censuses or LFS as these document all relevant variables at an individual level. In particular, censuses and household surveys should collect detailed data on

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- NSOs should lead the relevant agencies on improving data collection mechanisms and tools, and combine data from different surveys and administrative sources to identify possible gaps and improve both the accuracy and reliability of published statistics.

## DATA DISSEMINATION AND USE

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- States should regularly process and publish (quarterly, annually) the data on migration and labour that are routinely collected by multiple administrations (e.g., residence permits, work permits and border crossings), so that labour migration can be monitored in real time.
  - Published data on country of birth and country of citizenship should provide more detail than the simple dichotomies of native versus foreign-born or citizen versus foreign citizen. That is, the distribution of certain countries of origin that represent significant numbers of immigrants or foreign nationals should be available. Ideally, all countries of origin should be listed.
  - Statistics on the working age population distributed by labour force status and other work-related variables (e.g., employment status, branch of economic activity, occupation) should be cross tabulated by country of birth or country of citizenship as soon as foreign-born or foreign citizens represent a certain percentage of the total.
  - NSOs should publish immigration data by duration of stay.
  - NSOs or relevant institutions should disseminate data on non-resident, short-term migrants (cross-border workers and project-specific or short-term employees), to measure the scale of this phenomenon and assess its characteristics.
  - NSOs and public administrations should disaggregate published statistics by household type (private versus collective) and include labour camps and other collective living quarters.
  - States should ensure that access to data remains public. Access to archived data should also be guaranteed, for historical comparisons, time series analyses, and so on.



## RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO ASYLUM COUNTRIES

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- NSOs should include refugee populations in appropriate surveys (especially household surveys that, in some cases, do not incorporate collective households, refugee camps and settlements in their sampling base) or conduct dedicated surveys on refugee populations to estimate their size, geographic distribution, levels of education, skills and occupation, with the aim of helping them become self-sustaining populations where returning to their homeland or relocating to a third country are not realistic options in the short term.
  - Including refugees in host countries' statistical systems, especially national household surveys, would allow for comparisons (e.g., labour market access and working and housing conditions) with other resident populations (e.g., other kinds of migrants and nationals).