

# AFRICAN STATISTICS DAY

NOVEMBER 18, 2019

## Everyone counts: quality statistics for better management of forced displacement in Africa

African Statistics Day is an annual event celebrated on 18 November to raise public awareness of the importance of statistics in all aspects of social and economic life. The theme of this year is “Everyone counts: quality statistics for better management of forced displacement in Africa”, which is in line with the theme of the African Union Summit 2019, that is: “The year of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons: towards durable solutions to forced displacement in Africa”. It was chosen to raise awareness on the critical importance of disaggregated statistics when responding to the core concept of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), “leaving no one behind”, and specifically to the challenge of handling forced displacement in Africa.



“This theme is driven by the need for greater commitment by Africa to address the plight of its citizens in forced migration situations, by implementing strategic and relevant programmes and working towards the ratification of the various AU treaties and legal instruments addressing the plight of refugees and displaced persons to ensure we achieve the goal of Aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063 to provide a peaceful and secure environment for all Africans on the continent”

African Union concept note and roadmap framework on the theme of the year, 2019.

By the time you finish reading this release (in approximately five minutes), nearly 125 persons will have been forced to flee their home in the world, based on the 2018 trend and according to research by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Forced displacement worldwide is at its highest in decades. The young population (those under 18 years of age) constitutes half of the refugees. At the end of last year, again according to UNHCR, which published the report, *Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2018*, available at <https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2018/>), it was estimated that there were 70.8 million forcibly displaced persons in the world. Over a third of this number are in Africa, out of which 17.8 million are internally displaced persons, 7.4 million are refugees and asylum seekers, and about 1 million are returnees. This is a serious societal problem. Finding a sustainable solution is a must. High-quality statistics are at the core of good governance to address the challenge of forced displacement in Africa.



### United Nations Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics

The United Nations Statistical Commission, at its 47th session in 2016, decided to establish an international Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics, comprising participants from national authorities and international statistical organizations as well as other technical experts. The group is mandated to develop international recommendations, standards and guidance with the aim of improving the quality of official statistics on forcibly displaced populations.

### Policy-making on forced displacement in Africa —

The main factors that lead to forced displacement are conflicts and violence, along with natural disasters and climate change, health emergencies such as the Ebola outbreak, food insecurity and extreme poverty, and social injustice and bad governance. Statistical profiling provides disaggregated figures and analyses of the displaced population. It also portrays current situations and the challenges that need to be addressed for durable solutions. Hence, high-quality statistics provide the basis of comprehensive assessments and recommendations for evidence-based policymaking, which fosters inclusion and promotes socioeconomic development for the displaced people as well as for the host communities.



“I am here to urge you to stand up for a society free from xenophobia and racism. To defend the rights of vulnerable people who have abandoned everything they have ever known.”

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2016

Wide-ranging collaboration among national statistical offices, migration authorities and international organizations is necessary to produce accurate, relevant and timely data for humanitarian actions. Representative and high-quality data, produced using sound statistical methods, provide crucial guidance on where and how to spend resources concerning humanitarian and development interventions. Collaboration, guidance and the oversight that comes with those two elements ensure that the human rights of displaced populations are respected. Such collaboration is also vital to enhancing efforts that result in a government-led strategy which incorporates forcible displacement into the national development plan.

### Everyone counts —

In the years leading up to 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals will play an important role in policy discussions. All people, regardless of their backgrounds, have rights, including the right to be free from need, poverty and hunger, fear, want and lost dignity, and the right to a decent life in a peaceful and healthy environment. This means the Sustainable Development Goals need to be met even by those often left behind: people living in poverty and other vulnerable situations, including children, young people, persons with disabilities, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants. Their voices count.

Disaggregated high-quality statistics on forcible displacement are critical for monitoring and implementing international agendas and agreements, particularly the global 2030 Agenda and the Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want of the African Union.