

13 November 2025

Report of the Scientific Panel:

Priorities in International Migration Research (2023-2025)

International Migration: Strengthening the knowledge base for policy (2018-2022)

Review of Panel Activities: 2021-2025

Background

The Panel on *International Migration: Strengthening the Knowledge Base for Policy* was constituted in 2018 to meet the articulated need for scientific theory, evidence and analysis of current and future trends and patterns of international migration, and also of the causes and consequences of these movements in population, in order to inform policy and programmatic responses to migration and migrants. The work of the Panel was extended in 2023 with a more cogent title: *Priorities in International Migration Research*. The general charge of the Panel remained the same but with specific objectives:

- i. Preparation of working documents to continue the advancement of a world migration survey;
- ii. Completion and development of training materials for international migration analysis and research;
- iii. Following a consultative process, preparation of an agenda of priorities, opportunities and strategies for international migration theory and empirical research for the near future.

Membership

The membership of the Panel was expanded to include Diego Iturralde, Statistics South Africa who graciously agreed to serve as co-chair:

Diego Iturralde, Statistics South Africa, co-chair
Ellen Percy Kraly, Colgate University, co-chair
Guy Abel, University of Hong Kong
Christina Mariama Awumbila, University of Ghana
Marcela Cerrutti, Centro de Estudios de Población (CENEP)
Philippe Fargues, European University Institute
Bela Hovy, United Nations, retired
Marie McAuliffe, International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Mohammad Jalal Abbasi-Shavazi, Vienna Institute of Demography,
IUSSP Council Liaison

Documents prepared by the Panel:

The paper, “The Case for a World Migration Survey,” authored by Panel members, Marcela Cerrutti, Philippe Fargues, Mariama Awumbila, was published in the IUSSP Policy and Research Paper series in 2021 (No. 25). Their analysis addresses the need and rationale for an initiative to generate international comparable analysis of the causes and consequences of international population movements, analogous to the conceptualization of the World Fertility Surveys of the 1970s and complementary to the extant program of Demographic and Health Surveys. Also addressed and illustrated were key methodological issues, including challenges, in both survey instrumentation and sampling design.

To complement this conceptual analysis of a world migration survey, the Panel requested a paper addressing technical dimensions of generating nationally representative data survey methodologies. In 2025 the working paper, “The Potential of Household Surveys for Studying International Migration,” was prepared by Marcela Cerrutti and David Glejberman. The paper reviews principles of research design vis a vis international migration, sampling design, measurement, questionnaire organization and modules, and field implementation. Cerrutti and Glejberman seek provide practical perspectives on migration estimation – in the form of strategies - for the collection of data on international migration within extant national household and labor force surveys.

Guy Abel, Jamed Raymer and Ellen Percy Kraly continue their preparation of training materials on the measurement and estimation of migration using R. Building on his international program of training workshops, Guy Abel and colleagues are expanding his workshop materials to become an open-access teaching manual. Collaborating at Australian National University as well as virtually, the authors continue to make progress finalizing the manual “Handling, Measuring, Estimating and Visualizing Migration Data in R.” Publication of the manual is anticipated in 2026.

The work of IUSSP and the Panel on Priorities in International Migration Research was highlighted in the UN ESCAP *Asia-Pacific Migration Report 2024 Assessing Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration* (p. 113) (prepared by Ellen Percy Kraly).

Training Activities:

Throughout the tenure of the scientific Panel, Guy has conducted training workshops on the analysis of international migration using R. The inaugural workshop (two days) was held in 2019 at the Asian Demographic Research Institute at the University of Shanghai. Since that time Professor Abel has conducted workshops at the International Population Conferences in 2021 and 2025, as well as at the 2nd International Forum on Migration Statistics in Cairo. Interest in these workshops has been robust, with often over 50 registrants at each workshop.

The titles for the workshops are:

- IPC2025: Tools for Handling, Measuring and Visualising Migration Data in R - Brisbane
- IPC2021: Tools for Working with, Estimating and Visualising Migration Data in R - online
- IFMS2021: Workshop on the Application of R for Measuring and Estimating Migration - Cairo
- 2nd Asian Population Forum 2019 - Use of R in Demographic Analysis – Shanghai

Presentations:

Co-chair Ellen Percy Kraly made the following presentations in which she described the initiatives of the Panel, the world migration survey and issues of comparative migration analysis:

2021 Speaker, United Nations Network on Migration. High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) Voluntary National Review (VNR) Lab on Migration, 12 July 2021

2022 Speaker, United Nations Network on Migration. International Migration Review Forum. *Round Table 2*. Migration Dialogue. 9 February 2022.

2023 Keynote Speaker, United Nations Network on Migration Workstream Measuring progress: GCM indicators: Regional consultations. 28 July 2023.

2024 Keynote Speaker, “Towards GCM Monitoring: Challenges and Opportunities of Developing a Limited Set of Indicators for the GCM.” United Nations Network on Migration Workstream Measuring progress: GCM indicators: Global Consultation for Stakeholders. 28 March 2024.

2025 Speaker, 4th International Forum on Migration Statistics. Session, “Creating a Balanced Narrative on Migration in Africa: Exploring Data Solutions and Communication Strategies for Better Development Impact,” organized by the African Union Commission. Malmö University. 16-18 June.

Panel member Marcela Cerrutti made the following presentations in which she discussed the world migration survey or migration data and measurement:

2024 Speaker, *International migration in South America: emerging trends and challenges*. Center for Latin American and Latinx Studies, Internal Speaker Series, April 5th 2024, The University of Pennsylvania.

2024 Panelist, IUSSP Webinar on Innovations in Data Infrastructure for the Longitudinal Study of International Migration, organizado por el Panel Científico de la International Union for the Scientific Study of Population. March 7th.

2023 Speaker *Lights and Shadows in Contemporary South American Migration Landscape*, Center for Migration and Development (CMD), Colloquium Series, Princeton University, November 2nd.

2023 Speaker, Plenary Session, *Consenso de Montevideo, avances, oportunidades, desafíos una década después*. XVII Jornadas AEPA and IV Congreso Internacional de Población del Cono Sur, October 3-6 2023, Cafayate (Salta), Argentina.

2023 Panelist, *Buenas prácticas, desafíos y propuestas para la contribución plena de las personas migrantes en los países de destino*, Seminario Regional Contribución de la Migración Internacional al Desarrollo Sostenible en América Latina y el Caribe, CEPAL, Santiago, June 14th and 15th.

2023 Keynote Speaker, *A Regional Perspective: What Indicators for the GCM Will Mean in Practice at the Global Compact on Migration. Talks on Indicators in Latin America and The Caribbean*. UN Network on Migration, July 27th, Virtual event.

2023 Panelist, Plenary Session *Strengthening Migration Data for the Follow-up and Review of Global Agreements*, International Forum of Migration Statistics, Organized by DESA-UN, IOM y OECD, Santiago, January 24-27.

2022 Panelist “Población y desarrollo: Efectos de la pandemia sobre la dinámica demográfica de la región” (Panel 1) *Cuarta reunión de la Conferencia Regional sobre Población y Desarrollo de América Latina y el Caribe*, organized by ECLAC, Santiago, June 28-30.

2022 Panelist Round Table 4, International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), United Nations, New York May 17-20.

2022 Panelist Workshop on Household Surveys and International Migration Data: Using, Improving and Creating Efficient Migration Data Collection Tools, Organized by Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (IOM-GMDAC), Pretoria South Africa, virtual participation.

2021 Panelist, Round Table “The Implications of Global Pandemics for International Migration and Migration Research” 2021 International Population Conference, organized by IUSSP, Virtual participationm December 5-10.

2021 Panelist, Round Table “Huellas digitales para el conocimiento demográfico”, Jornadas de la Asociación de Estudios de Población Argentina, AEPA, October 15th (in collaboration with Germán Rosati).

2021 Panelist Conversatorios Técnicos: Dinámicas de Población y Políticas, sesión Movilidad sobre el tema: Visibilidad de migrantes a través de fuentes de datos. Reunión organizada por UNFPA-LACRO, June 22nd. Virtual participation.

2021 Invited participant at the Regional Review Meeting on the Implementation of the State-led Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean, organized by ECLAC, IOM, UN Network on Migration, Santiago de Chile, April 26-28.

2020 Panelist, Measuring Progress on Migration-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Other Global Commitments, en el International Forum of Migration Statistics, organized by IOM, UNDESA, OECD, El Cairo, January 19- 21.

Summary and recommendations

The activities of the Panel on Priorities in International Migration Research have advanced the literature of the population sciences concerning the significance and implementation a world migration survey. In both papers and presentations before professional and governmental audiences, contributors to the Panel have addressed both the conceptual dimensions of migration measurement within the context of survey methodologies as well as issues and challenges of measurement of migration flows, stock and characteristics. Kraly discussed the working paper on the use of national household surveys for the estimation of international migration at the 4th International Forum on Migration Statistics which lead to requests to receive the paper from international statisticians and migration researchers.

The fact that the work of the Panel on advancing a world migration survey is placed within the context of new UN recommendations on international migration and refugee statistics and thus creates linkages between the population sciences and international efforts to promote comparability in international migration, mobility and displacement analysis. *In this regard, advocacy for the pilot of an international migration module within extant national household surveys in two countries is warranted.* IUSSP should pursue funding for two national statistical offices from countries share share bilateral migration flows to collaborate on a project of comparative migration analysis using national sample survey methods and adopting definitions of international migration recommended by the United Nations Statistical Commission.

A very significant contribution of the Panel on Priorities in International migration Research has been the focus on training graduate students and national statisticians in the fundamentals of migration research – conceptualization, measurement and analysis. Engagement of the next generation of population scientists in migration studies is critical to both the future of demography as a scientific endeavor as well as for building an empirical and rigorous foundation for migration policy analysis. *The recommendation for the IUSSP to expand curricula for migration studies derives from the instructional work of the Panel.*

Finally, members of the IUSSP should be encouraged to continue the work of the Panel of Priorities in International Migration Research to communicate the fundamental relevance of the demographic analysis of migration for public policy across a wide range of policy sectors: migrants and immigration, displacement, human rights, social and economic development, health and the environment, *The case for evidence based population and migration policy should be made throughout the initiatives and publications of IUSSP. Whenever possible and appropriate, we – the IUSSP - should be fully present and vocal “at the table” within international and regional convenings – articulating and demonstrating the essential role of a demographic perspective on migration for the crafting policies and programs concerning sustainable development at all scales - global, regional and local - in this 21st century.*